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President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 45 (*continued*)

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/348)

Mrs. Gittens-Joseph (Trinidad and Tobago): In March 1995, over 100 Heads of State or Government attended the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen, affirming the importance of this issue as an item of the highest priority on the international agenda and their determination to deal decisively with the challenge of achieving social progress for all. The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action represents a comprehensive blueprint to secure this goal.

This decision to devote plenary meetings to this agenda item at both the fiftieth and the fifty-first sessions of the General Assembly is indicative of the general desire to maintain the momentum produced by the landmark Copenhagen conference and to translate the commitments made into concrete action. The report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (A/51/348) provides useful information in assessing the follow-up to the Summit.

Last December, the General Assembly, in resolution 50/161, reaffirmed the critical importance of national action and international cooperation for social development. The Assembly stressed the need to invest in people and their well-being in order to achieve the objectives of social development. It reiterated the call on Governments to define time-bound goals and targets for reducing poverty and eradicating absolute poverty, expanding employment and reducing unemployment and enhancing social integration within each national context.

The World Bank estimates that about 1.5 billion people live in absolute poverty today, most of them in developing countries, and that the number is increasing by approximately 25 million a year. Poverty has been brought into greater focus this year as it is the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. The struggle against poverty is a struggle for human dignity. The situation of a people driven by misery and desperation provokes social instability and threatens peace and security.

It has been recognized that the struggle against poverty and for the promotion of social development need to be pursued jointly by developed and developing countries, and that it is mutually beneficial to both. In this respect, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Governments of Norway and the Netherlands for the meeting held at Oslo last April to review the implementation of the 20/20 initiative, which was enunciated in the Copenhagen Programme of Action, and which aims to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of basic social services to the poor and vulnerable in the developing world through a partnership between developed and developing countries.

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The mobilization of financial resources is critical in the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, and the Oslo consensus on the 20/20 initiative is important. In this regard, there needs to be a sustained and active effort to generate funds and provide financial assistance, which are essential if we are to realize the commitments made at Copenhagen.

My delegation welcomes the actions taken so far by the United Nations as a follow-up to the Summit. The Commission for Social Development, which has primary responsibility for the follow-up to the Summit, decided at its special session in May that its work programme for the years 1997 to 2000 will be geared towards implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action on a thematic basis. Consideration of the special theme of poverty at the May meeting was timely, and the measures proposed for its eradication would be useful for follow-up work at the national and international levels. The increase in membership of the Commission and the decision that at future sessions panels of experts will participate in addressing critical areas of concern will greatly assist the Commission in fulfilling its mandate.

The Economic and Social Council held a fruitful session in July to look at coordination of the activities of the United Nations system for the eradication of poverty. The decision by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to establish inter-agency task forces will enhance the coordination required at the operational level in the United Nations system to provide support to Governments and national institutions for implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and other recent United Nations conferences.

Regional commissions are also expected to play a key role; the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has assisted and participated in follow-up meetings in the region, notably the Summit Meeting of Social Welfare Ministers from the Rio Group held at Buenos Aires in May 1995 and the regional technical follow-up meeting on the agreements reached at the Social Summit held in Quito in November 1995. ECLAC also assisted in the organization of the Hemispheric Conference on the Eradication of Poverty and Discrimination, which was held in Santiago in January 1996. In response to the Summit's call for the convening of regional meetings on a biennial basis at a high political level to review the progress made towards fulfilling the outcome of the Summit, the Government of Brazil has kindly agreed to host such a meeting in São Paulo in March 1997.

At the subregional level, the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) at their sixteenth summit conference, in July 1995, urged member States to conduct national consultations and asked the CARICOM secretariat to prepare a Caribbean policy position on social development based on the outcome of these consultations. It is hoped that such a policy will be ready for the regional economic and social conference proposed for next year. A Caribbean ministerial meeting on poverty eradication will be held in Port-of-Spain from 28 October to 1 November 1996 with the assistance of the ECLAC subregional headquarters in Port-of-Spain.

Addressing the causes of poverty is high on the development agenda of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago because of the increase in poverty levels and a shift in the character of poverty to encompass the phenomenon of the "new poor", most of whom have been victims of structural adjustment policies of the past decade. Trinidad and Tobago has always shown a commitment to the provision of a social safety net, but the Government is attempting to approach the problem in a more holistic manner through an integrated and multisectoral strategy. The focus is not only on supportive and remedial measures, but also addresses the rehabilitative and developmental aspects necessary for eliminating the root causes of poverty. The objective is to enable the poor to move out of their predicament and to enjoy sustainable livelihoods. This requires collaboration with all sectors of the national community.

A Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and Equity Building is being established, and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has obtained the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in this endeavour. The Unit is expected to give permanence to and ensure the continuation of the Government's efforts at poverty eradication and a general improvement in the quality of life of its citizens. It will create an enabling environment to facilitate national dialogue on the development of an intersectoral approach to poverty-eradication policies in order to promote consensus-building and practical approaches to collaborative planning. It is envisaged that the Change Management Unit will strengthen the capacity for planning, management, implementation and monitoring poverty eradication strategies, including the development of national goals and targets.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has also decided to establish a National Social Development

Council under the chairmanship of a senior cabinet minister; the Council will be launched on 24 October, United Nations Day. The National Social Development Council will oversee national action as a follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action emanating from the World Summit for Social Development and to the outcome of related international conferences. The Council will operate at the ministerial and technical levels, and the Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and Equity Building will serve as its Secretariat. The Council will address the issues of poverty eradication, the expansion of productive employment and the enhancement of social integration.

The United Nations sustainable development matrix, with appropriate adaptations, will be used, since this will facilitate easier collaboration among ministries, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. This exercise has begun through a joint UNDP/ECLAC project which will develop an interactive database for collating national information on social development initiatives and needs. In order to take into account the particular concerns of Trinidad and Tobago, the United Nations matrix has been adapted to include the problems facing young males in society and the emerging phenomenon of street children. The project will involve the participation of civil society, including the communities affected. It is hoped that this project and indeed the efforts generally undertaken by Trinidad and Tobago to eradicate poverty and build social equity will continue to obtain tangible support from the United Nations system and relevant international agencies.

Some 18 months ago, the international community was mobilized at the World Summit for Social Development to confront the seemingly intractable problems of poverty and unemployment and there was great resolve to work collectively to enhance social integration and social development where the well-being of the individual will be paramount. The commitments made in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action need to be implemented so that the social well-being of a significant segment of the world population will be improved as we move apace to the twenty-first century.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The representative of Costa Rica has made a very good statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and I would like to lend my support to that statement. Many of the things that need to be said have already been said. What we need now is action. Therefore, my statement will be very brief.

In the year and a half since the World Summit for Social Development, many countries have made great efforts in implementing the outcome of the Summit at the national level by designating national focal points, formulating short-, medium- and long-term strategies and plans for social development and starting to take appropriate and concrete measures to implement them. This is indeed commendable.

However, we have also noted with concern that there are more words than substance in some of the actions taken by relevant bodies of the United Nations and that there is very little substantive cooperation at the international level. This trend must be reversed.

Concrete goals for social development were set at the World Summit for Social Development. To attain these goals, all countries have made a commitment to cooperate at the international level. The Declaration of the Summit clearly states that:

> "these goals cannot be achieved by States alone. The international community, the United Nations, [and] the multilateral financial institutions ... need to positively contribute their own share of efforts and resources". (*A/CONF.166/9, para. 27*)

In order to accelerate international cooperation, we deem it essential to stress the following requirements. First, top priority should be given to the eradication of poverty. Poverty eradication was one of the three fundamental issues at the Summit and is a primary task facing many nations. It is absolutely unacceptable that some one fifth of humankind should live in abject poverty, most of them suffering from hunger every day. A commitment was made at the Summit to achieve the goal of eradicating poverty through prompt action. Now we need to see whether the international community, particularly the multilateral financial institutions, are ready to take action in this regard.

Secondly, the mobilization of resources is of key importance. The eradication of poverty, expansion of productive employment and enhancement of social integration all need resources as their material basis. Mobilizing resources is therefore a core issue in the follow-up to the Summit. Commitments were made at the Summit to:

> "mobilize new and additional financial resources that are both adequate and predictable and are mobilized in a way that maximizes the availability of such resources" (*A/CONF.166/9, Commitment 9 (i)*),

and to fulfil as soon as possible the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance. The world is still waiting to see if the developed countries will honour these commitments.

Thirdly, the United Nations should play a central coordinating role. Such coordination could focus on ensuring unified and comprehensive implementation and appraisal of the outcome of the Summit and other important international conferences related to social development, and particularly on mobilizing financial resources. Solid progress by the United Nations in this regard will be its most valuable contribution to implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

I should like now to brief the Assembly on China's implementation of the outcome of the Summit. The Chinese Government has formulated its Ninth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and an Outline of Long-Range Objectives to the Year 2000. In formulating this plan and outline, China has taken full account of the requirements of the Summit. China is determined basically to solve the problem, and has helped 200 million people break the cycle of poverty. This is a remarkable achievement by any standard in the world. We are also determined basically to solve the problem of food and clothing for 65 million people who are currently living in a state of poverty. We will continue to expand employment to reduce the number of people unemployed or awaiting employment to a minimum. We are determined to create 40 million new jobs. We are committed to raising living standard and will try to ensure the availability of nine-year compulsory education in the next decade, reduce or eliminate illiteracy among young people and ensure full and comprehensive progress and development. We will also stress environmental protection, ecology and natural resources.

China will, as always, support and cooperate with the United Nations in its efforts in the area of social development and take an active part in international cooperation in this field, thus making its contribution to the promotion of world social development.

Mr. Gorita (Romania): My country endorsed the statement delivered today by the Irish delegation on behalf of the European Union, so I would just like to add some specific comments.

The World Summit for Social Development represented a landmark in development-related international cooperation. It created an unprecedented framework for a global social vision projected into the twenty-first century based on the three core themes of the Summit: the elimination of poverty; employment; and social integration. It highlighted the need to complement economic growth with social development and reflected important shifts in the post-cold-war international approach to security through its focus on human security and sustainable human development. Furthermore, it placed emphasis on important principles and values such as responsibility and solidarity within and among nations and the idea of a new social contract, at the global level. This generous and coherent vision gained tremendous political weight through the strong common commitment expressed by States Members of the United Nations from the rostrum of the Summit.

The full and effective implementation of the commitments laid down in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action represents a challenge to Governments, civil society and the international community. Romania believes that Governments bear the primary responsibility for working out and implementing social development policies. At the same time, all actors in civil society, including non-governmental organizations, should participate actively in the attainment of these goals. Likewise, the contributions made by the United Nations and multilateral institutions represent an essential support to the national efforts.

As for the role of the United Nations in this area, I will not go into detail, because my delegation fully shares the views already expressed by the European Union. I wish to commend the progress achieved so far in the work of the three-tiered mechanism — comprising the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission for Social Development — which has been entrusted with the task of monitoring and implementing related to the Summit.

Romania supports the further strengthening of the functions of the Economic and Social Council to ensure an integrated and multidimensional approach to the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the other major conferences by harmonizing the agendas and work programmes of the functional commissions and enhancing coordination among relevant

United Nations agencies and with the Bretton Woods institutions. At the same time, more effective use of the inputs from the three ad hoc task forces of the Administrative Committee an Coordination and of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women will be extremely helpful in this respect.

We also encourage the extension of the interactive, innovative methods of work introduced in Economic and Social Council and some subsidiary bodies including the Commission for Social Development with a view to developing dialogue between Governments, the representatives of civil society and United Nations agencies.

Social development issues have been a constant priority item on the agenda of the Romanian Government. According to a modern integrated concept, social welfare policy is an important dimension of the Romanian governing programme. One of its major objectives is to protect the population against the social costs of the transition to a market economy. This policy has been carried out in compliance with the provisions of the Constitution of Romania and the human rights treaties to which it is a party, as well as with other relevant principles, such as: promoting social partnership; tailoring social protection to the needs of groups and individuals; decentralizing social policy; and striking a balance between needs and resources, between protection and self-protection and between the needs of current and future generations.

In this context, the outcome of the social Summit provided the basis for reviewing and developing the existing social strategy and laws of Romania. It also provided valuable inspiration for turning our national potential of social innovation to better account.

In the period since the Copenhagen Summit, the Romanian Government has strengthened its actions devoted to improving living standards and enhancing social integration, particularly for the most vulnerable groups. Here are a few facts. First, a project for the development of social services, sponsored by the Action Plan for Coordinated Aid to Poland and Hungary, is now well under way. Secondly, a pilot programme for poverty eradication, at the level of families and communities, was recently launched in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme. Thirdly, through the latest amendments to our law on social assistance, the assistance to the elderly, the disabled, to families without income or with a low income and to other high-risk groups has been substantially improved and diversified. Fourthly, further measures have been taken to enhance the protection of children under the National Plan of Action for Children to improve health care, education and the family environment. Moreover, a bill on the protection of minors in special situations was recently put before Parliament. Two other important bills, on health insurance and on pensions, aimed at reforming these social welfare mechanisms are on the agenda of the Romanian Parliament.

In the field of employment, significant action has been taken to improve training and job access for young people. Furthermore, innovative solutions have been used to reduce unemployment and encourage job creation. For example, in order to shift the emphasis from passive protection to active self-protection, a part of the unemployment compensation fund has been successfully used since 1995 to grant credits for the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises, with the stipulation that the entrepreneurs hire unemployed people for at least 50 per cent of the newly created positions.

Convinced that gender equality is a prerequisite for sound economic and social development, the Romanian Government has set up, in response to both the Beijing and the Copenhagen Conferences, a State department for the advancement of women. The subject of the empowerment of women was also broached at a recent subregional conference organized in Bucharest in cooperation with the United Nations on the implementation in Central and Eastern Europe of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The development of partnership with the main actors of civil society in the implementation of the outcome of the major conferences has been a constant concern of the Romanian Government. An important institutional step to this effect was to set up an interministerial working group for cooperation with civil society.

My delegation is convinced that international cooperation at all levels — bilateral, regional and global — is crucial for the effective implementation of the goals of the social Summit. Therefore, we welcome the Austria's initiative to host a regional conference on follow-up to the Summit and wish to participate actively in its preparation.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): At the outset, I wish to join previous speakers in commending you, Mr. President, on the able manner in which you are presiding over the work of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

I also wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report, contained in document A/51/348. My delegation would like to associate itself with the views expressed by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 45, on "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development".

Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/7 reaffirmed the crucial role to be played by the Commission for Social Development in the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development.

The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action underscored the conviction that development and social justice are indispensable for the achievement and maintenance of peace and security within and between our nations. Conversely, social development and social justice cannot be achieved in the absence of peace and security, or without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. This interdependence, which was recognized 51 years ago in the Charter of the United Nations, has acquired even greater importance today.

The holding of the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen in March 1995 was a significant milestone in the realization that the eradication of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration, and the achievement of sustainable development required an internationally coordinated strategy. Poverty continues to be the root cause of most ills in society despite the high level of prosperity achieved by sections of the world community this century. It manifests itself in many ways and should be tackled in an integrated manner, since economic development and social progress are interrelated. Appropriate action is therefore required to address the effects of poverty in both developing and developed countries.

We recognize that the primary responsibility for poverty eradication rests with national Governments and, more important, poverty eradication depends on their ability to mobilize grass-roots community involvement in the initiation and execution of income-generating programmes. However, without the timely and effective support of the international community as envisaged in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, these efforts will have limited impact.

In this regard, Kenya commends the Administrative Committee on Coordination for establishing inter-agency task forces designed to help coordinate United Nations activities in an integrated manner. We are also encouraged by the initiatives taken so far by the various United Nations bodies to prioritize poverty eradication in their programmes. We therefore look forward to healthy and enhanced complementarity between national strategies and the priorities of United Nations bodies and agencies.

Towards this end, my delegation thanks the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the President of the World Bank and the Heads of all United Nations agencies, for launching the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa on 15 March 1996. Its programmes of concrete action will accelerate Africa's development. We have no doubt that this Initiative on Africa, designed to complement the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development will be instrumental in the eradication of poverty in Africa.

As a follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, the Government of Kenya, in collaboration with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, has prepared a comprehensive economic policy framework paper which outlines the development strategy and key plans to be implemented over the next three years. The national objectives and strategies formulated in the policy paper are designed to create conditions for rapid and sustained economic growth, to a level which will result in a significant reduction in unemployment and poverty in my country on the basis of the following measures: first, maintaining macroeconomic stability by strengthening money and public sector financing; secondly, improving efficiency in the public sector by accelerating and streamlining reform in the civil service; thirdly, enhancing the external and domestic competitiveness of the economy; and fourthly, addressing the social aspects of development through targeted poverty interventions for vulnerable groups.

To achieve a significant reduction in unemployment and poverty, our economy needs to grow at an average of over 5 per cent of real gross domestic product. In this context, my Government has introduced measures designed to provide an enabling environment for private sector development with an emphasis on policies which are environmentally friendly. While the policies in support of growth and the social sectors are designed to ensure that the benefits of development reach the poor, targeted interventions will be required to provide income support to those who cannot wait until the growth process gathers full steam, as well as to those who cannot readily

participate in it because of special handicaps such as geographical isolation. The most important targeted interventions will be in rural areas where the need for remunerated employment is most acute. Energizing the informal sector, as the main source of income for about a quarter of rural households and possibly more in urban areas, will be an effective means of reducing poverty.

Kenya has designated national focal points to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action in an integrated manner. We have established committees from the grass-roots to the national levels, comprising Government officials, local communities and non-governmental organizations. We have also established special social development funds committed to financing projects for social development, including the fight against poverty at the grass-roots level.

Kenya therefore wishes to reaffirm its support for observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty in 1996 and the proclamation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, as contained in General Assembly resolution 50/107. We fully recognize that the goal of poverty eradication represents a major challenge for the United Nations system. In this regard, we are of the view that the United Nations system has an important role to play in the eradication of poverty by assisting Member States to translate into reality the global goals and commitments of international conferences, especially the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development.

In order to realize these objectives, there is an urgent need to mobilize substantial new and additional resources from all sources, in both developing and developed countries, in conformity with the commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. Kenya urges the urgent fulfilment of the previously agreed United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product of the developed countries for the overall official development assistance as soon as possible, and an increase in the share of funding for social development programmes.

In conclusion, my delegation is convinced that the international community should now demonstrate political will by honouring the commitments made if we are to realize these objectives.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): I have the honour to speak on agenda item 45, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". I wish to start by associating my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, as well as the statement made by the representative of Bolivia, speaking on behalf of the Rio Group. I would also like to commend Ambassador Somavía's statement which once again proved that he is a guiding spirit when it comes to this subject.

Important changes have taken place in recent months with regard to the follow-up of the Copenhagen World Summit. These are reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, which summarizes with clarity the alternatives open to us to maintain the momentum for the implementation of the commitments adopted during that Summit.

The Commission for Social Development has been designated by the General Assembly as the functional commission with the primary responsibility for addressing social and development matters. In addition, the Commission has submitted to the Economic and Social Council a multi-year programme of work to the year 2000, providing for comprehensive consideration of relevant themes within its field of responsibility.

These and other steps, enumerated in greater detail in the report, indicate the need to move from conceptual to more concrete approaches. The centrality of the question of development is no longer an issue among us. On the contrary, the measures recently submitted by the Commission for Social Development to the Economic and Social Council actually reflect a concerted effort to upgrade the question of development within the United Nations.

As a consequence of the results of recent global conferences, new strategies are being considered in the fight against poverty. In the United Nations, there is a growing awareness that issues such as investment, trade and financial flows, among others, should be urgently discussed by the Organization. It is also widely felt that the Bretton Woods institutions, when addressing questions related to development, should lay stronger emphasis on the social dimension of structural adjustment programmes.

These changes have firm and historic roots. They also reflect ongoing discussions regarding the concrete measures the United Nations should take to raise strong and visible support in the fight against poverty. For my delegation, it is particularly encouraging in this context to welcome the fact that the Secretary-General has been asked by the Commission for Social Development to

consult with relevant international organizations, among them the Bretton Woods institutions, with a view to securing their cooperation in the implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action. We hope that appropriate mechanisms will be soon established to facilitate this dialogue.

These efforts, inspired and undertaken by the United Nations, are indeed important. They constitute the background against which we must work. But when it comes to the implementation and monitoring of the mechanisms set forth in Copenhagen, nothing can replace the role that Governments and civil society must play at the national level. This was recognized by the Heads of State or Government at the Summit.

In Latin America, there is a growing awareness of this balance between self-promoted development and multilateral cooperation. As a consequence, Governments in the region have adopted a more realistic approach in their attempts to translate into concrete action their political commitment to the Summit's recommendations. The Rio Group countries, for instance, have established a regional mechanism dedicated to defining priorities designed to strengthen social policy programmes. Since Copenhagen, a number of meetings have taken place with the objective of reviewing and reformulating existing social policies on the basis of an integrated approach to social development. Two of these meetings were held at the ministerial level, in Buenos Aires and in Quito. The Summit of the Heads of State and Heads of Government of the Rio Group, which took place in Bolivia last September, highlighted the priorities accorded by the Group to the challenges facing our region.

As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, Brazil will have the honour next year to host a meeting in São Paulo at a high political level to evaluate the progress made towards implementing the outcome of the Summit. This event will be held in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, which played a key role in the Summit follow-up meetings of Quito and Buenos Aires. Other players with an active role in the development question will also participate, including non-governmental organizations.

We welcome the cooperation of non-governmental organizations in this domain. As we all know, as its priority task next year the Commission on Social Development will be targeting matters related to productive employment and sustainable livelihood. It is only logical to assume that such themes could greatly benefit from the interaction generated by the participation of different segments of our civil societies in these discussions.

Brazil has often stated that a country's capacity to satisfy the needs of its people depends on good social indicators, political stability, economic competitiveness, and scientific and technological progress. Without economic growth, however, the elimination of poverty, unemployment and marginalization loses the very fuel upon which it depends to revise adverse situations in these different domains. The common denominator of the multiple aspects of these problems is still development. Therein lies the key to peace, social justice, full employment and democracy.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): Speaking today under agenda item 45, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development", I should like to associate myself with the statement made by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. My country's contribution will consequently be based on certain themes that are of particular interest to us.

The review of the follow-up of the Copenhagen Summit offers us, for the second consecutive year, the opportunity to review at both the national and international levels our achievements in the context of the objectives and commitments assumed at the Summit. Clearly, this will not be an exhaustive consideration, and even less a stock-taking, since the task we have set ourselves is a long-term one. Nevertheless, in this way we are continuing our dialogue on the best ways and means of strengthening the necessary complementarity among our countries in a world dominated by globalization and interdependence.

Globalization is a positive force for the future of the entire world: unprecedented development in investment and trade, the opening up of the most populous regions of the world to international trade; and the possibility for more developing countries to improve their populations' living standards. Nevertheless, globalization also entails risks and can have potentially negative consequences for development by exacerbating inequalities among countries and, within countries themselves, among individuals.

Of course, no country is immune to this trend, but the threat looms chiefly over the countries of the South, particularly those low-income countries that are unable to benefit from the advantages of globalization and are becoming increasingly marginalized. This is why our

country, in the resolution adopted last year on the agenda item now under consideration, reaffirmed the validity of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. It was also stressed that strong determination is needed to invest in people and in their well-being in order to achieve the objectives of social development. We must commit ourselves to reducing poverty, eradicating destitution, creating new job possibilities and reducing unemployment. To this end, the promotion of an integrated and multidimensional approach was underlined. These fundamental elements for the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action should be considered within the context of an effective partnership and cooperation among Governments and individuals in civil society.

Mr. Fernández Estigarribia (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In this connection, concerning national action for the effective implementation of the commitments assumed at Copenhagen, I should like to recall here the main areas in which my country has already taken action. Tunisia's pioneering and innovative achievements in this respect have in many ways been reinforced by the decisions of the international community within the context of the World Summit for Social Development. Tunisia's actions for social development are ambitious and multidimensional. They are the cornerstone of our national policy to ensure the well-being and prosperity of the entire population, and they aim to guarantee both present and future generations conditions that are conducive to equity and prosperity.

I should like briefly to touch on a number of sectoral and inter-sectoral programmes, such as the initiative for the advancement of women, which Tunisia set up to ensure that comprehensive sustainable development, for the country. The main aspect of this multidimensional action is unquestionably the advancement of the role of women in the development process. We have taken many and varied measures in this area. In 1988, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali reaffirmed his devotion to the "Code of Rights and Obligations", a real source of pride for modern Tunisia. He did this by creating a ministry for women's and family affairs.

A monitoring mechanism on the status of women was set up to remedy the lack of information on the role of women in economic activity. Its task is to gather information on the situation of women and to analyse and disseminate it. A special programme was begun aimed at integrating 67,000 young women, aged 15 to 29, in the national literacy programme.

Greater opportunities have been made available to women so that they can benefit from continuing training programmes and improve their chances of access to management posts. We have also strengthened their right to work by enacting legislation and specific measures, and several projects in favour of rural women have been initiated.

The second aspect of social development that I would like to touch on relates to education, teaching, scientific research and vocational training. In Tunisia, basic education is free of charge and compulsory until the age of 17. The educational system was restructured in 1991, from kindergarten up to the last year of higher education. In the area of scientific research, a State secretariat was set up, followed by the establishment of new specialized institutes for scientific research. The vocational- training sector was also completely restructured, which has led to the creation of new, specialized structures.

Another, no less important, area of human development is that of basic health care. This sector, which has always been a priority, has received additional impetus during this past decade. The resources allocated to this sector have increased consistently, in the range of 23 per cent per year. Through the mobilization of supplementary human and material resources, we have seen improvements in health-care coverage and in the main health indicators. Tunisia has thus reached the goals of "Health for All by the Year 2000", as advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO).

A key sector to which Tunisia attaches priority importance is that of children. Tunisia considers improving the status of children as an integral part of the general amelioration of the social situation. Accordingly, it has focused its efforts on developing mechanisms to ensure the follow-up and monitoring of children in order to protect them and to promote their development. In this respect, Tunisia has adopted a code for the protection of the rights of children.

One last point that is fundamental to the national development strategy is that of promoting social solidarity in the context of combating exclusion. Tunisian policy in this area consists of employment programmes creating income sources and combating poverty in all its aspects.

I should like to mention here certain achievements in this area. The national programme for needy families has risen from 73,590 recipient families in 1987 to 101,000 in 1993. As regards child protection, over the last few years 100,000 children from 3 to 6 years of age have benefited from children's development programmes. Several centres for social defence and social integration have been created, and a number of activities have been carried out for the advancement of the disabled and for their inclusion in active life. We have set up several regional centres to protect elderly persons in need and benefits given to the elderly have been increased.

I should like to dwell a little longer on the National Solidarity Fund, the latest of our achievements for human development. Created in 1992 at the initiative of the President of the Republic, the National Solidarity Fund is aimed at financing services for low-income social categories and for towns lacking the minimum of basic infrastructures. Generally, it applies to isolated rural areas that are difficult to reach and that, due to the high unit cost of services, do not meet the criteria laid down in development plans. The Fund is financed from various sources, in particular by voluntary contributions from citizens, and enterprises and by grants and subsidies allocated by the State budget.

In 1993, a standing committee for the Solidarity Fund was set up to define, together with the central and regional administration services, criteria for identifying priority intervention areas. Along with these services, it monitors the implementation and progress of projects.

Six basic services were identified: roads and tracks, drinking water, electrification, education, health and housing, to which have been added cultural centres, youth activity centres, sanitation, combating desertification, and so on.

In 1994, the Fund was charged with improving income and employment levels in the zones concerned, and with seeing that people remain on their lands and in their home areas, which involves creating and consolidating income sources. From 1993 to 1996, the National Solidarity Fund made it possible to provide 35,160 homes with electricity and 60,382 homes with drinking water; to build or to improve 8,796 homes; and to build 1,565 kilometres of roads and tracks, 75 schools and 71 health-care centres.

The impact of the Fund on the populations concerned has been extremely beneficial, and it has further increased the spirit of solidarity of the Tunisian people in this respect. Thus, we decided to implement, during the period 1995 to 2000, a more ambitious national programme to develop all of the marginal areas by the year 2000. To strengthen these development activities, in 1996 the Fund was converted to a State secretariat.

As regards action at the international level for the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, Tunisia believes that the entire international community must mobilize, in a spirit of solidarity and effectiveness, to support the efforts and the sacrifices made by the developing countries in this area. However, we must recognize that the work now being done by the developed countries and by the United Nations system is not commensurate with the scale of the problems facing many countries, including a large number of African countries. This shortfall is reflected in the level of official development assistance and of investment, and in the way the debt problem is being dealt with.

In this spirit, we must urgently strive to reach the goal, set by the Summit, of devoting 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of developed countries to official development assistance. It would also be useful to mobilize new, substantial additional resources from all sources, whether national or international, public or private, traditional or new.

In this respect, my delegation is pleased with the commitment assumed by the G-7 Summit, held in Lyons in June 1996, to set in motion a world partnership for development for countries with emerging economies, for the poorest countries and for the sub-Saharan African countries. We also note the commitment of the G-7 countries to contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for private trade and financial flows to developing countries, as well as to guarantee major flows of official development assistance and to improve the quality of that assistance.

As regards international cooperation to promote sustainable development and with respect to building a consensus on development objectives and policies, my delegation would like to recall the following:

Member countries should undertake to respect the 20/20 formula. This implies firstly that the industrialized countries should devote 20 per cent of their official development assistance to basic social programmes. It is clear that developing countries at the same time should

devote 20 per cent of their national budgets to human development.

As regards new and innovative ideas to mobilize funds, the following principles should be reaffirmed. Funds mobilized by new and innovative ideas should not take the place of official development assistance. New and innovative funding methods should be distinct from financing from the regular budget and peacekeeping budget of the United Nations. Lastly, we feel that public investment remains necessary, but it must be supported by private investment in financing for development.

As regards the United Nations in the coordination and implementation of policies decided at the multilateral level, Tunisia stresses the essential role of the Organization. Its effectiveness, however, depends on its capacity to adapt, and on the political will of States to strengthen cooperation and partnership for economic and social development.

In this respect, Tunisia is pleased with the expansion of the mandate of the Commission for Social Development, which has been given the chief responsibility for the follow-up and review of the application of the results of the World Summit for Social Development. However, we would like to stress that the Commission will only be able to carry out its work successfully if Member States provide tangible support and give it the necessary means.

Lastly, as regards the specialized agencies, and particularly the Bretton Woods institutions, Tunisia would like to mention the role they have been given in mobilizing financial resources for social development and in acting on the commitments undertaken at Copenhagen, particularly as regards debt reduction in developing countries and assistance to countries carrying out structural adjustments so that they can move from the stage of adjustment to that of development.

Mr. Hormel (United States of America): When Vice-President Gore addressed the World Summit for Social Development, he asked the question: "What can be done to lift the poorest of our citizens into productive lives?" It is fitting that we take stock today of the progress we have made in implementing the ambitious commitments made 18 months ago in Copenhagen.

As representatives of Governments, we agreed at the Summit that we, in partnership with non-governmental organizations and the actors of civil society, would eradicate absolute poverty, create jobs, and empower women and men, especially older persons and people with disabilities, to become full participants in their societies. These are challenging goals, but the tools are at hand to achieve them and progress has been made.

The United States is committed to alleviating poverty by attacking its root causes. Indeed, in his State of the Union address this year, President Clinton spoke to a number of issues that address this goal. These include a call for an increase in the minimum wage, which was recently enacted by our Congress; the need for pensions for all workers; and reform of health insurance policies so that people will be able to keep health insurance when they change jobs and be free of the fear that they will not be able to get health insurance in a new job because of their health condition. The health insurance reforms have also been signed into law by President Clinton.

We are dedicated to reducing the federal deficit, which is key to investment, growth and job creation. We are also addressing falling real wages, and expanding tax credits for working families with children. Action to ensure that spouses pay child support, and strategies to provide support for child care for working parents, are also priorities.

At Copenhagen, we gave the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) a mandate to address poverty alleviation through coordinated social development programmes. My Government fully supports UNDP's commitment to poverty eradication through its Poverty Strategies Initiative. We also called on the multilateral development banks and other donors to enhance targeted social development investment lending. We are pleased that the international financial institutions, particularly the World Bank and the Asian and Inter-American Development Banks, are responding to this imperative.

Employment growth and poverty alleviation are critically linked. The United States is currently enjoying one of the lowest rates of unemployment since the early 1970s. Equally important, we have seen unemployment rates fall while inflation has remained in check. While the United States clearly has not faced the daunting economic challenges of the developing countries, some factors that have helped us to achieve this positive state of affairs may be applicable elsewhere.

A society in which individuals are encouraged to take initiative, coupled with a flexible job market that facilitates rather than impedes mobility, is a key factor.

Similarly, an economy open to competition will help to provide the confidence needed to attract private investment that is critical to growth and job creation. Finally, sound monetary and fiscal policies implemented by a government which is transparent and accountable will also help to provide the confidence needed to attract private sector investment that is critical to growth and job creation.

We gathered in Copenhagen to chart a course of action that would "put people first". Unfortunately, progress has been painfully slow with regard to the integration of people with disabilities into the economic and social mainstream. We recall that the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development stated that

> "one of the world's largest minorities, more than 1 in 10, are people with disabilities, who are too often forced into poverty, unemployment and social isolation." *(A/CONF.166/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I, para. 16 (h))*

Although the series of United Nations conferences has focused increasing attention on issues affecting the disabled, we must not lose the momentum gained through the commitment of the global community. For instance, we are seeing that more and more countries are adopting non-discrimination laws that protect the rights of persons with disabilities. This is an essential step towards empowerment, inclusion, and fostering independence.

Work within the United Nations on disability issues continues to achieve modest and positive success. This is due largely to the efforts of the Commission for Social Development's Special Rapporteur on Disability, who is now in the third year of assisting Member States to implement the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities that were adopted by this body in 1993. His work should continue. A panel of experts to advise the Special Rapporteur ensures that non-governmental organizations working in the disability field do so in partnership with the United Nations — again, work that must continue and be a priority in the future.

The First Lady of the United States, Hillary Rodham Clinton, pledged in Copenhagen an investment of $100 million over 10 years to achieve higher school-completion rates for girls in developing countries. Girls' education is one of the most important investments developing countries can make. Yet out of every three children who are not in school, two are girls. The Girls' and Women's Education Initiative (GWEI) signalled a new commitment that all basic education programmes assisted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will address the special barriers that prevent girls from enroling, completing and achieving equally with boys in school.

In September of this year, a special GWEI project was awarded to provide technical leadership to this effort. USAID currently funds basic education activities in 22 countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Near East. Under the new project, six "emphasis" countries will focus on building sustainable public-private partnerships to support girls' and women's education.

The New Partnerships Initiative, announced in Copenhagen by Vice-President Gore, is a comprehensive framework to strengthen civil society and to encourage partnership between the public and private sectors. It is an approach to sustainable development that seeks to transcend old debates about the relative merits of top-down or bottom-up assistance models. Instead, it stresses the need to build synergy between efforts at both levels and across the sectors within which our Agency for International Development works.

Working with partners in 18 countries, USAID is undertaking a learning process designed to explore and document new ways to build capacity and linkages among groups at the local level; to forge solid society-to-society linkages between these local groups and their United States counterparts; and to foster a legal, regulatory and fiscal environment conducive to citizen participation and community initiative.

USAID's micro-enterprise programme, initiated in June 1994, is designed to reach the poorest members of society, particularly women, with loans and savings services. It aims to build financially independent institutions that serve increasing numbers of poor entrepreneurs. During 1996, USAID allocated $120 million for micro-enterprise funding in developing countries. At a recent congressional round table, USAID pledged to continue its micro-enterprise initiative in 1997 and 1998.

In its resolution 50/161, this body established a three-tiered process, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission for Social Development, to monitor implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. In July, the Economic and Social Council decided to annualize the meetings of the Commission for Social

Development and to expand its membership in order to strengthen the Commission's ability to fulfil this monitoring role. It is well known that my Government opposed this decision by the Council. Now we must work together to ensure that the Commission can respond effectively to its new mandate.

We welcome the fact that the Commission has adopted a multi-year program of work, and we applaud its decision to invite experts to contribute to that work. The Commission has chosen the theme of employment for review at its next session. We look forward to participating in that discussion, while emphasizing that the Commission must work closely with the International Labour Organization in its consideration of this topic. The ILO chairs the Summit follow-up Task Force on full employment and sustainable livelihoods for all.

If the promise of Copenhagen is to be realized, we must affirm our commitment to the goals of the World Summit for Social Development. The United States is prepared to do its part to work for a more just and equitable global community.

Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway): My delegation fully supports the statement made by the representative of the European Union. We would like, however, to make a few additional comments regarding the follow-up of the 20/20 initiative.

The World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen was a manifestation of a growing consensus that people must be at the centre of our development efforts. A central aspect of this consensus is the commitment to the goal of universal access to basic social services. Such services do not only produce invaluable social benefits; they are essential for sustainable economic development and constitute an investment in people's hopes for the future. Investing in people's health and education is a long-term investment for the benefit of society at large and should be an integral part of any strategy for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

International conferences such as the Summit have often been criticized for producing statements of good intentions, but little action. One of the Summit's outcomes that could prove such criticisms wrong was the call upon interested countries to implement the so-called 20/20 initiative, which aims at achieving universal access to basic social services. We believe the 20/20 concept has a special appeal, *inter alia*, because of the mutuality of the commitment involved. It does not address the donor community alone, nor is it another conditionality for aid. It is intended to be a tool for both developing countries and their partners jointly to give higher priority to basic social services.

Norway has taken a special interest in making sure that this commitment from Copenhagen is translated into action. Together with the Government of the Netherlands, we therefore invited interested countries and multilateral organizations to Oslo in April of this year in order to consider ways to implement this initiative. Today I am able to report that the meeting was successful. A comprehensive analysis of the 20/20 initiative and its potential was undertaken, and I believe that we managed to bring the objective of universal access to basic social services one important step closer to becoming a reality.

There was broad agreement at the meeting in Oslo that the fight against poverty requires a broad range of policies and actions at all levels, including, *inter alia*, such macroeconomic policies and actions to meet basic human needs. Within this framework, development of basic social services was considered of particular importance in reducing the worst aspects of poverty and as a key element in breaking the poverty cycle.

The 20/20 initiative should be seen in this context and should be applied as a pragmatic and flexible guideline. The full outcome of the Oslo meeting — "The Oslo Consensus on 20/20" — is available as United Nations document A/51/140.

Having said that, the real test of success will, of course, be the extent to which we are able to translate the Oslo Consensus into practical action. Participants at the Oslo meeting agreed that developing countries should take the lead and set the priorities. Developing-country Governments were encouraged to prepare basic social programmes as part of the poverty-reduction strategy suggested by the Summit, with the aim of achieving universal access to basic social services over an ambitious but realistic time period. Donor countries and multilateral agencies were invited to provide technical and financial support for the preparation and implementation of such programmes. Several developing countries present expressed their interest in being "pilot cases" for the initiative.

For our part, we recently had a review of our development cooperation policy in the Norwegian Parliament, and I am happy to report that there was strong support for giving increased priority to basic social

services and for reaching, and even going beyond, the 20/20 goal. This has now been followed up in the Government's budget proposal for 1997, which includes significant increases in the allocations for health and education purposes.

The participants in the Oslo meeting agreed that a follow-up meeting should be held within two years to exchange information and experience, and to review and assess progress in implementing the 20/20 initiative. Norway took on the responsibility of ensuring that such a follow-up meeting will take place. It is our sincere hope that interest in the initiative will have grown significantly by then and that we will be able to review concrete experiences underway in a number of countries.

Mr. Scarpetta (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is my honour to address the General Assembly on agenda item 45, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". Colombia associates itself with the statement made this morning by Costa Rica in its capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, and wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for the report on the item before us today.

The World Summit for Social Development was a historic event that brought together the Heads of State or Government of the world in order to recognize the importance of social development and the well-being of humanity, and to give the highest priority to these objectives in the light of the urgent need to solve serious social problems, particularly poverty, unemployment and social exclusion.

During the Summit the Heads of State or Government recognized that the primary responsibility to attain the goals set out in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action rested with the national Governments themselves. The previous session of the General Assembly reiterated its call to Governments to define time-bound goals and targets for reducing overall poverty and for expanding employment issues as issues of the highest priority.

The guidelines that the Government of Colombia has followed in drafting its development plan, known nationally as the "Social Leap", fully coincide with those of the Copenhagen Summit. The Government's development plan gives priority to the eradication of poverty, the creation of productive employment, social integration and attending to the basic needs of society.

The Government of Colombia has set in motion the Social Solidarity Network, a central element of its strategy. Its objective is to improve the living conditions of the poorest and most vulnerable sectors, and to facilitate their participation in the major social programmes through joint efforts by State and regional institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society. The Social Solidarity Network has been implementing 13 special programmes, aimed at the most vulnerable sectors of the population affected by poverty.

These include the plan for emergency urban employment, through which the Government has co-financed 572 projects that have benefited 42,400 people. The assistance programme to support and train the poor and the unemployed has benefited 21,000 low-income young people. The plan for emergency rural employment has financed 635 projects that have generated income for 27,000 families. The programme for child and maternal care has provided subsidized social security for 82,000 mothers and 64,000 children under a year of age. Close to 900,000 children have benefited from the programmes for food assistance. The programme to support mothers who are heads of families with children in elementary schools has assisted 78,128 mothers. The programme to help the elderly, which focuses on the most vulnerable group — the destitute elderly — has aided 67,000 people. The rural housing programme has provided subsidies for 147,343 families; and owing to the programme for sport and artistic talent, 2,150 young people have obtained access to economic support.

Likewise, among the social policies in favour of children, the Government has promoted a "pact for childhood", through which the Government and civil society have carried out joint activities in the fields of health, nutrition, education, childhood protection and justice, all within a structured and permanent plan.

In this way, the Government fulfils one of the objectives of the Declaration by defining goals and objectives, within a time-bound framework, in order to reduce poverty and to increase employment. The Government has formulated specific and concrete plans aimed at modernizing the productive structures of the country, in order to legitimize a new economic plan through genuine proposals for social development, based on the concept of social solidarity and good governance.

At the regional level, Colombia has actively participated in meetings convened by the Rio Group. In

this regard it associates itself with the statement made by Bolivia on behalf of the Group. During the most recent Rio Group Summit, which took place in Cochabamba on 3 and 4 September, the Governments reiterated their commitment to fight against poverty, malnutrition, marginalization, lack of access to health services, and illiteracy, through policies aimed at sustainable social development in the mid- and long term.

In addition to the efforts made by Governments in the national context, it is necessary to reiterate, as the Secretary-General does in his report, the importance of international support and cooperation among nations, including between developed and developing countries and among individual developing countries. This cooperation should be based on equality, mutual benefit and the spirit of solidarity. Technical assistance for national programmes and the support of international financial organisms are required.

The General Assembly in its resolution 50/161 reaffirmed the importance of agreeing on a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing countries to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes. This initiative, if carried out effectively, should benefit the poorest and most vulnerable social sectors.

It is equally necessary effectively to fulfil a commitment of the Copenhagen Declaration: the pledge of the donor Governments to strive to achieve as soon as possible the agreed target of allocating 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to official development assistance. These two important commitments were reiterated by President Ernesto Samper Pizano, in his capacity as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, in the message he addressed to French President Jacques Chirac, in the latter's capacity as Chairman of the Group of Seven on the eve of that Group's meeting in Lyon.

The United Nations should play a fundamental role in following up on the implementation of the Summit results. In this regard, the Commission for Social Development's recent important decisions to hold annual meetings and to increase its membership will make its work more effective. Colombia also hopes that the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) will lead to significant progress. These would be laudable results of the Copenhagen Summit, where the current Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations acted so well as Vice-President and Chairman of the Main Committee.

Colombia will continue to implement firm internal measures to combat poverty and unemployment and to promote social integration, since it is convinced that we should focus on the human being as the centre of development. As President Ernesto Samper stated to this body, the final objective should be the creation of a new citizen who is more productive in the economic field, participates more in the political field, and provides more solidarity in the social field.

Mrs. Florez Prida (Cuba) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: May I, at the outset, endorse the statement made by the delegation of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The World Summit for Social Development is credited with having strengthened our recognition of the human being as the purpose and goal of any national or global strategy or policy for development. However, there are still innumerable obstacles to achieving this goal, many of them structural.

1996 has marked an important turning point in the Summit follow-up, primarily because of the focus on the multidimensional and multisectoral nature of international cooperation for the eradication of poverty. Last year, 25 per cent of the world's population lived below the unbearable level of absolute poverty, most of them in developing countries, particularly in Africa. Inequality in the distribution of wealth at the global, national and territorial levels has been growing rapidly.

My delegation is deeply concerned by the situation described by the Secretary-General in his report in document A/51/348. It shows that, although some progress has been made, it is not enough given the extent of the problems, some of which, rather than abating, have gotten worse. The difficult situation facing the international mobilization of development resources deserves special attention. The official development assistance provided by most donor countries has decreased and, apparently, will continue to dwindle over the next several years, since the foreign assistance has been one of the budget items most affected by deficit-reduction programmes in donor countries.

The burden of the foreign debt continues to crush a significant number of developing countries and the proposed relief measures are in many cases accompanied

by the imposition of structural reform and adjustment programmes, whose negative impact on the people of the debtor countries has contributed to the development of explosive social situations in those countries. The globalization of the economy and the effects of neoliberal policies are increasingly frustrating the realization of the noble goals of social justice included in the Copenhagen commitments.

The African countries and the so-called least developed countries need special attention. For this group of nations, recent developments have been extremely negative. Political will continues to be crucial to solving the gloomy prospects ahead. Resources do exist, but they are wasted on an arms race inconceivable in the wake of the so-called end of the cold war.

My delegation wishes to express its most resolute support for the decisions of the Economic and Social Council on the composition and working methods of the Commission for Social Development, and is convinced that this body is in a better position today to fulfil the mandate this Assembly entrusted to it in resolution 50/161.

I should also like to recognize the results achieved through the system-wide coordination of work on the Copenhagen Summit follow-up. This was evident in the organization of discussions and additional activities during the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. We hope that there will be further improvements during the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, which begins next year.

Over the last three decades, Cuba has designed and put into practice, with significant results, policies and strategies aimed at achieving development on the basis of a fairer and more equitable distribution of available resources. Cuba has thus managed to meet primary health, education and social-security needs, to mention but a few and, according to several indices, even to surpass them, despite a particularly tense economic situation, aggravated by the tightening of the United States blockade of Cuba.

These results have reinforced the validity of the thesis that, in a framework of social justice, it is possible to achieve certain basic social development goals in circumstances of scarce economic growth and even decline. However, numerous social development projects have been discontinued and it has become apparent that it is impossible for us to make steady progress towards social development without an international environment conducive to our economic growth and overall development.

My country, as always, is ready to share its experiences in this sphere and to participate actively in any effort of the international community to promote compliance with the commitments entered into during the Copenhagen Summit.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): I would first like to welcome the consideration of the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development in this plenary session. It reflects the level of importance attached to the commitments made in Copenhagen. I would also like to express our appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica for the statement she delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

When the international community decided to convene the World Summit for Social Development, it did so with the clear purpose of promoting higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development. It did so to find solutions to international economic, social, health and related problems. While the Summit did succeed in bringing together Heads of State and Government to lend the highest levels of support to this undertaking, and did move social development to the centre of international attention, serious problems remain. The developing countries have not reaped the benefits of globalization and in fact many of their economies continue to suffer reversals. Rampant poverty in the world remains one of the more serious threats to peace and stability, in addition to being a barrier to social progress.

We in the international community committed ourselves to eradicating poverty. We committed ourselves to creating an enabling environment for social development. We committed ourselves to an agenda that would remove obstacles, free the potential of the individual to improve his or her standard of living and the welfare of children. The propositions enunciated at Copenhagen were simple: reduce poverty, increase employment, improve social integration. Yet too many countries remain marginalized with little sign of help forthcoming in the immediate future, and too many people continue to pass their lives with little or no hope.

Indonesia recognizes that the primary responsibility for social development is at the national level. And developing countries are doing what they can with what they have. But we cannot accept that the developing

countries are to undertake significant measures — let alone achieve the Summit's goals — with their hands tied. Only when the international economic situation is conducive to development and international cooperation for development strengthened will the developing countries be in a realistic position to achieve any meaningful and lasting progress.

A new compact for international development needs to be pursued, based on the spirit of partnership and cooperation. And I would not hesitate to add that any efforts within the United Nations should be geared toward supporting such a partnership, with a view to making the United Nations more responsive to poverty-alleviation activities. However, I would also caution that any deviation from such a course must be avoided.

At the same time, it is urgent and absolutely necessary for the international community to take action to solve the debt burdens of the developing countries. The recent proposal of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to address the indebtedness of the heavily indebted poor countries is a welcome step, although it will require modification to remove its restrictive aspects. The poverty and destitution of a country should not be made an occasion for forcing on it alien values nor for making judgments that bear little or no relation to development.

Furthermore, the agreed official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product of the developed countries must be fulfilled at the earliest possible time. And we still await a multilateral trading system that is equitable, transparent and rule-based, in accordance with the conclusions of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

During this session of the General Assembly we need to move forward vigorously on the agreed conclusions 1996/1 adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its coordination segment. Those conclusions support the efforts of the Member States to implement their global goals and commitments in the field of poverty alleviation made at several international conferences, in particular at the World Summit for Social Development. The General Assembly should, moreover, provide the necessary guidance to ensure that the entire United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, works cohesively to implement the conclusions and undertakes substantive follow-up to the Summit.

Although the special session of the General Assembly to review the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development is still four years away, it is important to closely monitor both the progress on and the obstacles to the implementation of the agreements reached at the Summit, as well as the coordination efforts outlined in resolution S-1996/1. In this regard, the revitalized Commission for Social Development has ample room to play a role.

Indonesia has been active in addressing its own problems of poverty, unemployment and social integration. In 1970, 60 per cent of our population — 70 million people — were poor. By 1993, after considerable efforts by the Government to improve the economic situation, the number of poor had declined to 25.9 million people, or only 13.7 per cent. And during that same time, the population in Indonesia increased by 73 million. Our goal now is to reduce the numbers of poor, especially the absolute poor, by 12 million people. One means being employed is what we term the IDT Programme, or financial assistance under presidential instruction. The IDT channels small amounts of seed capital to less developed villages, providing local communities with input into programme development and implementation. The people themselves become empowered to contribute to development, for it is they who will reap the benefits.

In conclusion, I would like to underline the central importance for the international community to respond effectively and cohesively to meeting the expectations raised at Copenhagen. For although each nation must bear responsibility for improving its socio-economic situation, problems of a global nature demand global solutions. With all certainty, to ignore the plight of the poorest among us and to become lax in the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development is to hamper future progress and prosperity for all humanity.

Mr. Jayanama (Thailand): The Thai delegation would like to associate itself with the important statement delivered earlier by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Thailand would also like to express its support for the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Twentieth Annual Ministerial Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China.

We would also like to commend the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. We wish to draw particular attention to the role of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), as mentioned in the report. ESCAP can

play an important role in enhancing regional cooperation and in achieving the outcomes of the Summit through means such as the proposed regional ministerial conference on social development in 1997 to review progress in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

It was acknowledged last year in Copenhagen that

> "the primary responsibility to attain the goals set out in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action rested with national Governments". *(A/51/348, para. 11)*

This sentiment was further emphasized by the adoption of resolution 50/161 in 1995, wherein the General Assembly proclaimed the critical importance of national action for social development. Thailand is in full accord with this view and has undertaken a concerted effort to realize these goals within our country in order to address such social ills as poverty, drug abuse, disease and hunger, which — despite our considerable success in national economic and social development — continue to bring suffering to people's lives.

In the implementation and monitoring of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the Summit, the Government of Thailand has designated the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board as the focal point. Thailand's eighth five-year national, economic and social development plan, which commenced on 1 October of this year, is consistent with the goals of the Summit and also integrates the recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The plan is a people-centred development plan in which economic development is to be regarded as a means and not as an end in national development. Its single objective is human-centred development, and it has adopted the human development index as the means of setting development targets.

The plan aims to empower the Thai people to solve problems by themselves by enabling them to upgrade their capabilities, wisdom and ethics. It also marks the first time in Thai history that people from all professions have been invited to participate in the development planning process.

Towards achieving the three main objectives of the Summit — the eradication of poverty, the enhancement of productive employment and social integration — our eighth national development plan has mapped out three corresponding strategies.

The first strategy is to strengthen the national economy by promoting equitable income distribution and improving the quality of life of the Thai people. This strategy will help eradicate poverty and enhance productive employment. To achieve this first strategy, the Government has implemented an overall economic policy aimed at achieving stability and employment-generation. Rural development and prosperity-decentralization in the region have been expedited by building up economic and social basic services to catalyse sustainable rural development and by expanding the quality and quantity of basic services to meet the local demands of the country. Moreover, the public sector's continued investment in infrastructure and social services has contributed to the rise of income and the improvement of the status and quality of life of the Thai people. It is also important to note that the Government encourages measures to integrate economic development that is environmentally sound.

The second strategy aims to promote social integration and social justice by encouraging popular participation and by upgrading the potential of people of all ages and of both genders. The measures under this strategy include the adjustment of the learning and training processes in order to enable people to think conceptually and work practically; upgrading the potential and capability of the underprivileged to earn more income and rely on themselves, so as to bridge the disparities in income; the encouragement of spiritual development, emphasizing good deeds, self-discipline and ethics; and the development and improvement of the existing social-insurance system to reach various target groups.

This strategy also seeks to strengthen family and community institutions in order to increase their role and participation in the development of the economy, society, culture, environment, politics and administration. It seeks to enhance the role of women to be a driving force in national development and to participate actively in the decision-making process for the sake of integrated and balanced development. It also seeks to create a supportive and favourable environment for youth and juvenile development.

The third strategy is aimed at developing our national administration in the implementation of our national plan. This strategy provides for clearer measures aimed at enhancing the participation of the private sector in national development, building up the capacity of the mass media to advocate national development, creating

common understanding among relevant parties from the top-down to bottom-up planning system, and setting clearer methodologies, under joint programmes, for government-service reforms.

Thailand believes that, by achieving the goals of the eighth national development plan, it will also be able to achieve the goals of the World Summit for Social Development.

Although the *Human Development Report* of 1996 recognizes Thailand as being among those countries which have a high rate of human development, despite modest per capita income, we recognize that we must not become complacent, but must press ever forward. Thailand is firmly committed to fulfilling the noble goals of the World Summit for Development and to taking all necessary measures to develop the potential of our people to the fullest, in order to ensure their full participation in building a society for all.

Among other measures undertaken, perhaps the most important is that we have committed to decreasing the proportion of the poor per total population to less than 10 per cent by the next millennium.

Mr. Cassar (Malta): Malta associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the delegation of Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

The delegation of Malta welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, contained in document A/51/348 of 18 September 1996.

The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/161 of 22 December 1995, acknowledges that the principal duty for the attainment of the goals set rests with the national Governments. Also proclaimed is the critical importance of the cooperation, support and contributions of the international community, the United Nations, the multilateral financial institutions, all regional organizations and local authorities, and all actors of civil society — including private citizens — for social development.

By the same resolution, the General Assembly mandated the Commission for Social Development, on which Malta is honoured to serve, with the primary responsibility for the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the Summit; it also mandated the Economic and Social Council to provide overall guidance and coordination.

My delegation commends the action taken so far by the Commission for Social Development, the Economic and Social Council, other functional committees and the United Nations Secretariat, funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

My Government's programme of action to follow up the World Summit for Social Development is based on a number of principled criteria.

Social justice is guaranteed by giving particular attention to the more vulnerable members of society.

The provision of both social security and social welfare continue and is enhanced. The former ensures material sustenance; the latter is essentially concerned with non-material aspects of support from the community to all persons, particularly those suffering from forms of psychological, cultural or material deprivation.

Social services should aim at a more personal and family-centred focus. While it is the general intention to organize and channel welfare services as much as possible through the family, it is recognized that this has to be done as a function of individual needs and personalities and according to the choice of each member of the family.

Individuals should not become passive recipients of assistance, but ought to be encouraged to participate actively in helping themselves, and eventually others, in safeguarding their well-being. Every person should be able to benefit from and contribute to the spirit of solidarity, the reciprocal concern between all the members of society thus being underlined. Services need not be directly provided by the State, but are often better provided through other agencies. Consequently, government and non-governmental agencies are to complement each other.

These principled criteria which guide my Government are based on a vision that places the human person and the family at the very centre of social development. Following these principled criteria, the Government of Malta has over the past years enacted legislative measures to buttress social security, employment without discrimination, the equal status of women and the provision of equal and universal opportunity and access to free education at all levels, as

well as the whole range of health services and social housing. In the case of employment, special provisions have been made for the disabled, single parents and marginalized or disadvantaged groups, including rehabilitated drug abusers and former prison inmates.

Resources have been made available so that welfare services could operate efficiently. An institute for social work has been established within the University of Malta to provide for the training of social workers in the preventive, rehabilitative and reintegrative social work connected with the family, youth, the elderly, the disabled, abusers of drugs and alcohol and victims of domestic violence.

Malta has also established national commissions with specialized mandates. These include commissions on youth, the elderly, the disabled, the advancement of women and on combating the illicit use of drugs. Civil society is strongly represented on and is considered an essential component of these commissions.

Malta is fortunate to have a strong sense of commitment ingrained in its people and in having an active body of volunteers working under the guidance of several non-governmental organizations. The role of the Catholic Church in this sphere is of particular significance in the development of awareness and the provision of a wide range of services to the community. These non-governmental organizations — many of which are pioneers in social work in Malta — today continue to play a significant role in conjunction with the Government in the provision of psychological, social and material support to those most in need.

These principled criteria and the strategy adopted underline the need to strengthen social justice in ways other than purely financial. They provide and sustain a more caring attitude among citizens, as they reciprocally share problems and benefits. The common good and the well-being of communities at the local or national levels is as dependent on awareness at the personal and social level as it is on commitment and engagement.

Our commitment to ensuring social justice and our promotion and protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are the supporting columns of that bridge which should lead us into the twenty-first century.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): I would first like to associate myself with the statement the representative of Costa Rica made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Philippine delegation also commends the Secretary-General for his report on the item under discussion.

Early in the spring of 1995, we were witnesses to a most historic event. One hundred and eighteen Heads of State and Government gathered in Copenhagen to address the problems of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration.

The cold war had ended and there was a promise of greater and closer international cooperation to achieve higher living standards and improved social conditions, a process that would hopefully lead to the empowerment of the individual. Unrelenting poverty, especially among debt-strapped countries, widespread and worsening unemployment, a deepening environmental crisis and a growing technological and economic gap between developed and developing countries had focused attention on the plight of the human person. It became increasingly clear that people and their needs were both the reason for and the beneficiaries of development.

Towards this end, the World Summit for Social Development sought to secure international and country-specific commitments and time-bound goals and targets for reducing overall poverty, eradicating absolute poverty, expanding productive employment and enhancing social integration. The special concerns of marginalized and disadvantaged groups were given recognition that went beyond the pale with politics.

The role of non-governmental organizations and civil society in nation-building and in the empowerment of people was recognized, and their participation in the follow-up to the Summit was encouraged.

It is a source of pride and gratification to my Government that during this historic event and its preparatory process, the Philippines had the privilege of serving as Chair of the Group of 77 and China. The Philippines has also been closely involved with the implementation phase of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development in its capacity as Vice-Chair of the Commission for Social Development and as Chair of the working group that worked on the framework for the follow-up process. The Philippines has also been involved in the functioning

of the Commission itself, in the monitoring, review and appraisal of implementation efforts.

Shortly after the Copenhagen Summit, the Philippines began to undertake various measures to implement fully its commitments. Most notably, the Philippine Government created the World Summit for Social Development Multisectoral Committee, in order to coordinate fully its efforts in this regard. It is composed of representatives from government, non-governmental organizations, people's organizations and other concerned groups.

This year, the mandate of this Committee was expanded to cover the recent round of other international human development conferences held at Cairo, Beijing and Istanbul. It was therefore renamed the Multisectoral Committee on International Human Development Commitments. This Committee will serve as a coordinating body that will harmonize all follow-up activities resulting from the international human development conferences.

The efforts of the Philippines to improve the human development goals and aspirations of its people are focused on poverty alleviation, employment expansion and social integration. These concerns are addressed by our Social Reform Agenda through its three-point agenda: access to quality basic services; access to productive resources and asset reforms; and institution-building and participation in governance. The Social Reform Agenda pursues a convergence strategy which emphasizes services to vulnerable sectors of society, such as the small farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous people, workers in the informal sector, the urban poor, disadvantaged women, youth, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and victims of disasters.

At the core of the Social Reform Agenda strategy is the minimum basic needs approach, which aims to meet the survival, security and enabling needs of needy households. On top of this approach, the Social Reform Agenda has adopted basic reform commitments addressing the specific needs of the sectors for greater access to productive assets, for example, post-harvest facilities for farmers.

On employment expansion, the Philippine Government has embarked upon a Comprehensive Employment Strategy Programme, which emphasizes employment-generation, the promotion of labour welfare, and human resource development focused on providing skills for productive employment. To strengthen social integration, the composition of the Social Reform Council was expanded to include representatives from basic organized labour, business and non-governmental organization sectors. Moreover, sectoral representatives were appointed by the Philippine President to the Philippine Congress.

For the elderly, the President signed into law the Senior Citizens Act, which seeks to establish senior citizen centres in every municipality and city, and which provides certain privileges for low-income elderly persons. Likewise passed into law was the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, which provides for rehabilitation, self-development and self-reliance for persons with disabilities and for their integration into the mainstream of society. On the issue of youth, the National Youth Commission was created to coordinate youth programmes in the country.

We wish to state that the Philippines is well on its way towards implementing its commitments with respect to the 20/20 initiative. This is indicated by the encouraging increase in the percentage of national Government resources and official development assistance mobilized for priority social programmes over the past few years. At the domestic level, local government units are being encouraged to increase spending on human development priorities. Such local efforts are needed to complement resource mobilization at the national level. In this connection, we were glad to hear from the representative of Norway of the successful outcome of the Oslo consensus on the 20/20 initiative.

At this point, we wish to state that there is a need to emphasize efforts at the international level for mobilizing resources to implement fully the commitments reached at Copenhagen. It is our earnest hope that the momentum reached at the World Summit for Social Development will be sustained in the years to come. In Copenhagen, we achieved a common acceptance of human equality and human dignity as the framework upon which to build a future where each person will be vested with the right to the enjoyment of basic human needs, as well as the opportunity and capacity to develop his or her potential to the fullest. Now, the bigger task of realizing this is at hand.

While some decisions have been made with regard to the mechanisms for the implementation of Copenhagen, as was done during the special session of the Commission for Social Development, one has yet to see a concrete proposal on resources: the necessary wherewithal to implement the Programme of Action.

As we draw closer to the end of the millennium, when we shall meet again in this very Hall to take stock of what we have accomplished or have failed to accomplish in the interim, we shall need more than promises in order that we shall not be found wanting.

Mr. Ngo Quang Xuan (Vietnam): Let me first express a note of high appreciation for the exemplary way Ambassador Razali has been presiding over the work of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. This demonstrates a deep sense of responsibility and also constitutes a substantial contribution, in practical terms, to the Organization at this difficult time.

It has been over a year and a half since our leaders met at Copenhagen to highlight the significance of social development for human well-being. Together, they solemnly made a universal commitment to social development with a far-reaching vision.

At this session we are to look back and take stock of the developments and progress made so far and devise the next steps to implement further and follow up the Copenhagen commitments. We note with satisfaction that the question of social development has since then been generally accorded a higher priority on both the international and the national agendas. Efforts have been made to tackle issues embodied in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action — such as poverty eradication, productive employment and social integration — as essential to economic and social development for every country and for the world as a whole.

On the basis of Copenhagen and as suited to their specific conditions, countries have initiated their national programmes of action and achieved initial results. The United Nations, its specialized agencies and international financial institutions have contributed their part in the implementation of activities and programmes at the national, regional and international levels. The Commission for Social Development has also carried out meaningful work this year in this regard.

My delegation highly appreciates the comprehensive analysis presented by the representative of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, on the question of social development.

In reviewing the 18-month follow-up of the Copenhagen Summit, I shall focus on two concrete issues which, in the view of my delegation, are of the utmost importance, especially to the people of developing countries who make up the majority of the world's population. Those issues are an enabling international environment and the alleviation of poverty and hunger.

In today's world of ever-increasing interdependence, international support and multilateral cooperation have not only been helpful; they have been indispensable. Given the numerous global challenges to our survival that must be met, they are particularly indispensable for the countries of both the North and the South. For social development we need peace and we need efforts and actions at both national and international levels. However, there are still conflicts that divert the energy and resources needed for development, and they must be resolved. There are still constraints and unavoidable extraneous conditions that hamper our common efforts and restrict our cooperation for the betterment of mankind in each and every country. In addition, the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance is ever farther out of reach. The past two years have witnessed a trend towards continued reduction in the provision of development aid. The greatest sufferers from this situation are the developing countries.

As was recognized at Copenhagen, social development is an integral part of and the result of many related issues and must be pursued as a component of an overall development strategy. In addition, the human person has been placed at the centre of development. Yet hunger and poverty remain an acute problem in our world. More than one fifth of the world's population is now living in conditions of absolute poverty, lacking the most essential means necessary for daily survival — food, clean water and sanitation. Many developing countries must overcome this critical situation of poverty and hunger before they can enjoy the fruits of social development. In this respect, we express our hope that the outcome of the World Conference on Food Security will help in the alleviation of hunger and poverty, especially for those in the most difficulty.

In the light of the above situation, we, together with other delegations, call for a renewed and greater commitment to multilateralism and international cooperation based on genuine partnership and mutual benefit. More resources need to be mobilized to support the countries of the South in their efforts to overcome difficulties. In this context, the United Nations needs to play a more active role. We therefore urge that the Agenda for Development now under consideration be

adopted as soon as possible. That will be beneficial to our common cause of social development.

Since Copenhagen, Viet Nam has made great efforts to implement the Summit's Declaration and Programme of Action. In line with our commitments at Copenhagen, a national programme of action has been developed. Priorities have been set and measures to allocate energy and resources to achieve them have been adopted and carried out. These strategies have been included as an integral part of the country's overall renewed policy for economic and social development towards the goal of building a Viet Nam with a prosperous people, a strong country and a just and civilized society. We have achieved significant results in many fields, providing the people with better living conditions.

In the pursuit of social development in Viet Nam, as in many other developing countries, the alleviation of poverty and hunger remains a critical problem. This issue is high on our national agenda. We recognize that economic growth is important but that it is not the sole factor in eradicating hunger and poverty. Hunger and poverty have multiple causes that must be dealt with in the broader context of economic and social development as a first and necessary step.

Thus, a nation-wide programme for hunger eradication and poverty alleviation has been launched, and we have responded actively to the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, 1996. I would like to share some of our experiences in this connection.

The main focus of the programme for hunger eradication and poverty alleviation is the creation of opportunities for the poor to increase their incomes and improve their standards of living, and not merely a means of social relief. It is a comprehensive programme that ranges from helping the poor with capital for income generation to policies for education, training, health care, infrastructure building and so on. Almost all provinces and cities have established and implemented programmes for hunger and poverty alleviation. Resources and funds have been mobilized through a joint venture between the State, local government and the people.

A Bank for the Poor, with an initial capital equivalent to $45 million, has been established to make credit funds accessible to poor households and to help them in their productive activities. The Bank is a non-profit institution that provides the poor with direct preferential credit, and it has branches in all the country's 53 provinces and cities.

We have also developed various cooperation programmes for hunger and poverty alleviation with assistance from other Governments, from such international organizations as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and from non-governmental organizations. In May 1996, the Government of Viet Nam, in coordination with UNDP, organized an international workshop on this subject. We also participated in the Indo-China conference on hunger and poverty held at Bangkok from 22 to 24 July 1996.

We support the proposal that this item be considered at the General Assembly's session each year until the year 2000, when a special session will be held for an overall review, assessment and appraisal of the programmes and activities undertaken to implement the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. That will provide us with opportunities to exchange experiences and work together to advance faster towards the fulfilment of the commitments we entered into at the World Summit for Social Development.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): More than a year has passed since the World Summit for Social Development, a forum that determined the strategy for future world social development. The Copenhagen Programme of Action is a rich source of ideas and practical recommendations that can be helpful for national strategies and programmes aimed at achieving specific goals in the field of social development, taking due account of national conditions, traditions and priorities.

In our view, the spirit of the agreements reached at the Summit reflects the sense of solidarity within and among nations and their intention to curb the acute social problems being faced by many countries. Once considered an exclusive responsibility of national Governments, such problems are now of a global scale and hence require global attention.

Although the global conferences held earlier in this decade drew the attention of the world community in various ways to the problems of social development, we agree with speakers who have concluded that the social Summit at Copenhagen absorbed all the trends in world social development and dealt with all societies, highlighting the interdependence and the universality of our world.

All countries, irrespective of their geographical location, experience the need for social development and integration. This is also true for Ukraine and other newly independent States, for which the transition from one socio-economic system to another, and from a totalitarian system of government to real democracy, has turned out to be a more complex and protracted challenge than was imagined at the outset. The implementation of comprehensive, radical political reforms and the introduction of a socially oriented market economy are the two key elements on which Ukraine is focusing its new economic strategy in present-day conditions.

Ukraine's participation in the World Summit for Social Development at the presidential level was of special importance for us, and that is why the Government is taking specific social measures to apply the Summit's recommendations in its domestic policies.

In a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General in March of this year, the President of Ukraine outlined the measures undertaken at the national level in following up the World Summit for Social Development. One of the major practical steps was the recent approval of the main direction of the activities of the State executive power of Ukraine in the implementation of the final documents of the World Summit for Social Development.

Taking into account the proclamation by the United Nations of the year 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, Ukraine has also elaborated a specific national plan of activities for the Year, which is currently under way.

As a new member of the Council of Europe, Ukraine is making every effort to meet the exceptional demands of this authoritative body in social and economic matters, in particular with regard to social policy, social security, employment, demography and migration.

Yesterday, at the 35th plenary meeting, our delegation informed the General Assembly about some of the measures that the Government of Ukraine is undertaking to create favourable conditions for the general development of children. A number of other programmes in the social field are also being launched, among them the long-term programme on the advancement of women and the family, the programme for the protection of maternity and children, the education programme, the national family-planning programme, the integrated programme on the problems of the disabled and others.

It is the view of our delegation, that the report of the United Nations Secretary-General (A/51/348) gives an exhaustive picture of the work done in implementing the Copenhagen Programme of Action endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/161. We note with satisfaction the efforts undertaken to establish a reliable mechanism to ensure the Summit follow-up. The delegation of Ukraine considers that this mechanism creates a reliable basis for coordinating United Nations activities in the implementation of the decisions of the Copenhagen Summit. A series of international conferences and meetings for social progress, held in France, Norway and Chile, and the preparation of a series of seminars to be held in Denmark will also serve that end. The initiative of Austria to convene a European regional meeting in 1997 to review the progress made towards fulfilling the commitments entered into at the Summit has our full support.

In this connection, our delegation takes note of the results of the special session of the Commission for Social Development held in May of this year, which adopted a multi-year programme of work within the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action and came up with recommendations on the coordination of the activities within the United Nations system for the eradication of poverty.

We believe that adoption of agreed conclusions 1996/1 on the role of the United Nations in the overall effort for the eradication of poverty and in assisting Member States to translate the global goals and commitments of international conferences and the statutory mandates of each organization into concrete actions and activities at all levels should promote coordination and strengthen the role of the Organization.

In general, we consider that a year after the World Summit we have the necessary mechanisms that can help us to implement the decisions of that important forum. We therefore hope that the special session of the General Assembly to be held in the year 2000 will review our five-year joint efforts with a special view to evaluating the capability of the Organization to solve the global social problems facing the international community.

Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe): I have the honour to address the Assembly on agenda item 45, "Implementation of the World Summit for Social Development", on behalf of the States members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC): Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius,

Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and my own country, Zimbabwe. We would like first of all to endorse the statement made by Costa Rica as Chairman of the Group of 77.

I should like to express my region's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his informative report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (A/51/348). We have found the report useful in providing us with an indication of what the United Nations is doing with regard to follow-up activities.

With the decline of conflicts within our region, the SADC member States are now beginning to concentrate seriously on economic and social-development issues. With regard to the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, the member States have set up focal points that will be responsible for the national follow-up of the Summit goals.

At the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen our Heads of State and Government committed themselves to the goal of eradicating poverty, expanding productive sectors, creating employment, and creating a favourable and enabling environment for world economic recovery and growth through decisive international and national action. That commitment was the result of the realization that social development was an ethical, political and economic imperative for humankind. The Summit reaffirmed rights relating to education, food, shelter and employment. The Summit also identified the goals of the promotion of full employment and social integration. The Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at Copenhagen provided the international community with a pragmatic and viable framework for advancing the social development and well-being of all peoples, as enunciated in the United Nations Charter.

Notwithstanding the international commitment to rid the world of those social ills, we have yet to see a concrete financial commitment to change rhetoric into the realization of set targets. The socio-economic gains that have been made in recent years have yet to have a significant impact on the daily lives of men, women and children. Over one billion people live in absolute poverty, and 67,000 join the ranks of the poor each day. We see poverty eradication as being at the very core of the implementation of the outcome of the social Summit; this was aptly summed up by President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania in his address to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. He said:

> "Unless the issue of poverty is addressed comprehensively, we cannot achieve meaningful and enduring peace." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-First Session, Plenary Meetings, 22nd meeting, p. 2)*

Poverty is a denial of human rights, and we cannot have full democracy amidst absolute poverty and social injustice.

In this context, we believe that the Copenhagen Programme of Action reflects the determination of the international community to address the problem of social injustice and its attendant ills. The full implementation of the outcome of the world social Summit requires the cooperation of developed and developing countries. There must be the requisite political will to ensure that the Copenhagen document is not relegated to the shelves of the archives. The momentum generated by the world social Summit must not be allowed to dissipate into nothingness.

While we agree with the view that the implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action is primarily the responsibility of each national Government, it is undeniable that developing countries, especially those in Africa, are encountering insurmountable difficulties in reallocating already overstretched budgets to finance follow-up activities. The increasing disparities and instability that characterize the international economic system offer bleak development prospects to most African countries, making it difficult to marshal the necessary resources for social development. We continue to struggle with the overwhelming problems of ponderous debt burdens, trade barriers and other forms of protectionism, low commodity prices and onerous structural adjustment programmes. National social integration programmes cannot be sustained without international solidarity. Social disintegration is a threat to peace both within and between nations. Social development should therefore be on a global scale. There is an urgent need for international cooperation in strengthening the institutional capacity of developing countries to implement the Summit goals.

The implementation of the 20/20 compact would go a long way towards achieving the goals of the world social Summit. The SADC subregion, my subregion, has embraced the 20/20 compact, convinced as it is that it is vital for the provision of social safety nets in the quest for social development. We realize that the 20/20 compact was agreed upon on a voluntary basis, but we

feel that the global implementation of the compact would enable developing countries to integrate the socially excluded groups.

While we acknowledge with appreciation that some developed countries have attained the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for overall official development assistance, we note with great concern that the target has not been reached by many of our developed partners and that in fact the level is regrettably on the decline. We call on our development partners to honour the commitment they made at Copenhagen.

With regard to trade, it has been recognized that the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements will have an initial negative impact on developing countries, especially the net food importers. In this context, measures should be taken to mitigate those negative effects, in particular the loss of markets and competitiveness. At Copenhagen, we agreed to ensure the establishment of an enabling economic environment and that an exercise to offset the negative consequences of the Uruguay Round agreements would be an essential part of the setting up of that environment.

The debt crisis is a major obstacle, not only to economic growth but also to the provision of essential social services in most countries in our region. We agreed at Copenhagen that the objective was indeed to reduce debt to sustainable levels. In fact, we believe that there has to be a serious effort at debt cancellation for Africa, the continent with largest number of least developed countries. That initiative has to entail the participation and commitment of international financial institutions, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions, the Paris Club and other multilateral creditors. We welcome the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and hope that it will give a fillip to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and deal comprehensively with the problem of African development.

The United Nations should play a greater role in promoting the effective implementation of the Summit's Programme of Action. We acknowledge that the United Nations system has undertaken some important initial steps to facilitate the implementation of the Summit goals. We welcome the setting up of the inter-agency task forces, which are meant to assist Governments and national institutions in implementing Summit commitments. The recent establishment of an Inter-Agency Committee on Women with the responsibility of addressing, on a system-wide basis, all aspects of the Beijing Conference, is a far-sighted development on the part of the United Nations system, and we welcome it.

I wish to conclude my remarks by noting that although various types of machinery have been put in place, there is no mention of the necessary resources to start the process going. There should be a coordinated effort to mobilize financial resources if we are to move from sheer rhetoric to implementation.

Programme of work

The President took the Chair.

The President: Tomorrow morning, as already announced, remaining speakers in the debate on agenda item 98 will be heard first.

Tomorrow morning, the Assembly will also take up three reports of the Fifth Committee: on agenda item 126, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara"; on agenda item 133, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia"; and on agenda item 135, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia".

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations A/51/PV.38

General Assembly
Fifty-first Session

Official Records

38th plenary meeting
Thursday, 17 October 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 98 *(continued)*

Operational activities for development

Report of the Secretary-General on the progress at mid-decade on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/217 on the World Summit for Children (A/51/256)

The President: I should like to inform the Assembly that the representative of Uganda has requested to participate in the debate on this item.

Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed on Tuesday, 15 October, at 4 p.m., may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of this delegation in the list of speakers?

There being no objection, Uganda is included in the list.

Mr. Ruiz Pérez (Colombia): I wish to begin by expressing, on behalf of the Government and the delegation of Colombia, solidarity and deepest sympathy to the beloved fraternal Republic of Guatemala at this time of sorrow.

I have the honour of speaking at this session of the General Assembly on an issue of great importance to my country: the progress made in the implementation of the General Assembly resolution on the World Summit for Children.

Allow me to thank the Secretariat for the preparation of the report that is the basis for our deliberations. The report is particularly informative and useful for evaluating the achievements reached at mid-term and the difficulties faced in fulfilling the commitments.

The World Summit for Children was a historic milestone for the protection and defence of children. Moreover, it was the first of the United Nations world conferences of the 1990s. It initiated a new cycle which continued up to the most recent conference, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). It was therefore a starting point for renewed efforts by the international community for social development and the fight against poverty.

The agreed objectives opened up new hopes, not only for the definition of specific goals — for example, in terms of child mortality — but for the provision of international assistance required to achieve them. These promises have been translated into national action plans, an innovative way of preventing the objectives and commitments from remaining merely on paper. At the mid-point of the decade, information on progress achieved has proved difficult to interpret. In some areas, as in the case of the fight against preventable diseases and the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, advances have certainly been significant. In areas

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such as education and the reduction of malnutrition and mortality, however, the results still leave much to be desired.

We hope that the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child will lead to its prompt incorporation into domestic legislation. This is indispensable for the support of measures pertaining to health, nutrition and education, as well as of other actions for the protection of children. It also constitutes an important base for the implementation of national plans of action.

The effectiveness of these plans depends on the capacity of the international community — and particularly the United Nations system — to provide the assistance required by the developing countries. We concur that responsibility should not fall solely to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). That would be to deny the increasing generalized character of problems concerning children in the context of the fight to eradicate poverty and to improve levels of social development.

Institutions such as the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have equally important roles to play. Only through them can we ensure that our objectives where children are concerned will become an effective part of the comprehensive strategies for human development.

Mobilization of necessary resources to attain the objectives of the Summit is one of the most serious problems we face. The capacity of developing countries to generate their own resources and earmark the necessary funds for the social sectors has been seriously eroded by fiscal constraints deriving from economic structural reform programmes and, in many cases, from the heavy burden of debt. There are no indicators suggesting a satisfactory improvement in budgetary appropriations earmarked for basic social services.

The efforts of developing countries to mobilize resources at the State, private-sector and civil-society level, cannot alone guarantee the volume of resources needed to finance programmes for children. International cooperation needs to be substantially increased, both in the form of new and additional financial resources and through broader programmes of technical assistance and other forms of international cooperation.

Only if the international community lives up to its commitments to finance social development and transfers increased resources to the developing countries will we be able to fulfil the promises made to our children seven years ago. It is now time to renew that commitment and to adopt the measures necessary to ensure compliance with the responsibilities upon which we have agreed by the year 2000.

For all of these reasons, my delegation supports the idea that in the year 2001, a special session of the General Assembly should be held to review the extent to which we have succeeded in fulfilling our promises to children and how well we have implemented the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children.

On that occasion, those sitting in supreme judgement over us will be the new generation of youths and children. At that historic moment the international community will have an opportunity to design new strategies so that our commitments to children will extend beyond the year 2000.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The World Summit for Children, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York in 1990, was a turning point in international cooperation to promote the survival of children, their health, nutrition, education, protection and development — in general, to look out for their future. The participation of the Syrian Arab Republic in the World Summit for Children was based on its desire to participate in the actions undertaken to enhance efforts to achieve these supreme objectives.

Before mentioning the achievements of the Syrian Arab Republic since the World Summit for Children, I would first like to express our satisfaction with the report of the Secretary-General on the progress at mid-decade on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/217 on the World Summit for Children.

While expressing our satisfaction with what has been done to implement and carry out the resolutions of the Summit for Children, we should also like to confirm the need to promote concerted action to ensure that the cause of children continues to be the focus of our concerns. According to one particular social theory, the future of the State depends on progress achieved in fostering the well-being and prosperity of children. In the other words, children are, as it were, the very kernel of the State.

Since the Summit Declaration the Syrian Arab Republic has been making considerable efforts to provide protection and development for children and the family. National action has taken place on a large scale. Symposia and conferences have been held, the most important being the first national conference on child survival, held under the auspices of the President of the Syrian Arab Republic, Hafez Al-Assad, on 28-29 January 1991. That conference followed preparatory activities by committees of experts in the social, economic, health, cultural and environmental fields.

The economic sector, various professional and social organizations and religious institutions participated in this conference, as did ministers and heads of people's organizations. An overall national plan of action was adopted at that conference, which reflected the status of Syrian children and what had been achieved to promote their interests in various areas. This programme of action, which defined the 1995 mid-decade goals, the strategic objectives up to the year 2002 and the ways and means for implementing these targets in all areas, was approved by the Syrian Government for inclusion in the country's basic economic and social plans. The programme was then submitted to the various governmental and non-governmental sectors in our country for implementation. To that end, a follow-up committee was also established under the direction of the Minister of Health.

At the beginning of this year, we drew up a national report indicating what had been accomplished in relation to the mid-decade goals, as a result of the periodic review carried out by experts. I would like to refer to some of the salient points of the review. First, in the health field, action is under way to reach the target of eliminating poliomyelitis; salt iodization is being implemented; the rate of maternal mortality has decreased from 143 in 1989 to 107 in 1995 for every 100,000 live births; 93 per cent of all children have been vaccinated and immunized against hepatitis; studies and evaluations have been made to supplement current child nutrition information; and health plans have been drawn up to promote future health care.

Secondly, in the field of education, the Syrian Arab Republic is in the vanguard of countries of the region with regard to applying a system of free and compulsory education at the primary, secondary and university levels. School attendance at the primary level for 1994-1995 was 98.8 per cent, including 99.2 per cent in the case of boys and 98.6 per cent in the case of girls.

Thirdly, the State has developed activities to assist children with disabilities through a national plan containing various programmes providing many benefits to children in the areas of training, employment and social integration. The State protects children in the aftermath of war and armed conflict, which has led to a massive and forced exodus from neighbouring areas. The State is striving for a just and comprehensive peace to put an end to the suffering of children in the aftermath of war. Similarly, the State protects children and low-income families through the provision of grants and low-cost loans.

Mr. Muntasser (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Fourthly, the Syrian Arab Republic ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992 and a ministerial committee was established to disseminate public information on the principles of the Convention within Syria and the Government, with the cooperation of official and people's organizations. The State is doing what it can to ensure that laws on children are fully observed in the social and cultural areas. These constitutional provisions are in full accordance with the spirit and letter of the international Convention on the Rights of the Child. This has been achieved by applying its provisions in our national legislation. Matters relating to children are the focus of the Syrian Government, which provides many social grants for pregnant women and mothers. It is also developing child benefits since 48 per cent of the country's population are children under the age of 18.

Thus, we are following the fundamental principles and the directives laid down by President Hafez Al-Assad. Despite our economic needs and the cost of defending our territorial integrity, we are very proud of the accomplishments of our country. Furthermore, our country will continue its efforts to ensure and promote the health, education and protection of children, as well as focus on population matters and the environment, to ensure that Syrian children have the requisite level of education to enjoy a bright future.

Now that we are discussing the sacred mission of caring for children, I would like to refer to another humanitarian question, and that is: can any child in the world develop in the context of occupation and massacre? All the children in the Golan, the occupied Arab territories or in southern Lebanon are suffering as a result of the occupation. The reply to the question is

found in United Nations resolutions. In this regard, I would like to reiterate that the costs of war are far greater than the cost of peace and must affect the needs of children.

Mr. Menlang (Sudan) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: It gives me great pleasure to inform you of the measures taken in my country in the context of the implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and of the cooperation between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, the National Council on Children's Welfare and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). On 23 June 1996, a symposium was held in our capital, Khartoum, to keep members of the national Parliament abreast of ways they can contribute through legislation to the implementation and furtherance of the provisions of the Convention. The symposium was inaugurated by the First Vice-President, Mr. Al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih, who stressed the following positions of principle in his inaugural statement.

First, the Government of Sudan takes a special interest in the implementation of the international Convention, particularly as the Sudan was among its first signatories. The President himself participated in the signing. Secondly, the interest of Sudan in the rights of children arises from the faith of Islam, which cherishes man and safeguards the rights of children. Thirdly, to translate this interest into reality, the Government of Sudan established the National Council on Children's Welfare and takes special interest in the education of children. It has made elementary education compulsory and takes special interest in the health of children, including our interest in establishing children's hospitals. Fourthly, the efforts of the Sudanese Government for peace and stability will continue until it has put an end to the causes of displacement, so that children can lead a happy life with their families and parents. The State attaches special interest to the programme of peace, development and stability, of which children will be the main beneficiary. Fifthly, the First Vice-President stressed Sudan's full commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Many documents were discussed at the symposium, which together highlight various aspects of the welfare of children. As expected, the members of the National Council who took part were familiar with the issues, demonstrated their enthusiasm and pledged to promote the well-being of children in their provinces. A final document was adopted at the symposium which is aimed at ensuring healthy living standards for the children of Sudan. The document also provides for priority to be given to children's welfare in national development programmes. Cognizant of the need to enhance governmental and voluntary institutions, the members of the National Council will endeavour to implement the Convention's provisions and enhance efforts to safeguard children's health and eradicate poverty, famine and malnutrition. Furthermore, it will seek to promote peace and the culture of peace and to enhance international cooperation designed to safeguard the needs of children and their rights. In conclusion, we emphasize our readiness to apply the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this connection, our Parliament ratified this instrument at a special session, thus making it a legally binding State document.

Paragraph 161 of the Secretary-General's report states that conflict and insecurity in the southern part of the country are a barrier to the eradication of guinea-worm disease and that almost half of the world's remaining cases are in the Sudan. I would like to inform you of some of the efforts being made by the Sudan to eliminate the disease. Despite the insecurity caused by the rebel movement, the Sudanese Government is cooperating with the Carter Center to eradicate this disease by the year 2000. Former President Carter has visited the Sudan more than once and a Carter Center office has been opened in the Sudan to cooperate with appropriate government organs. I call upon the international community, through the United Nations, to provide material and technical assistance to help eliminate this disease. We also wish to emphasize that the rebel movement stands in the way of implementing the programme to control guinea-worm disease. It also uses children in armed conflict, thereby endangering their lives.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): As one enters the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) headquarters in New York, one sees an inscription on the wall near the receptionist's desk which says that the earth has not been given to us by our parents but has been lent to us by our children. I think that inscription summarizes the essence of our debate here today.

Our deep appreciation goes to the Secretary-General for introducing the report on the progress at mid-decade on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/217 on the World Summit for Children. This report has certainly provided the Member States with a unique opportunity to have a comprehensive assessment of the progress that has been made so far towards "keeping the promise" made during the World Summit for Children in 1990. It also permits us to share our experience with a

view to finding more effective means to address the challenges that lie ahead of us.

We are happy to note that the report indicates that significant progress has been made in improving the conditions of children in most parts of the world during the last five years. Yet we agree fully with the Secretary-General that a great deal remains to be done. Nonetheless, one fact deserves our attention and appreciation, and it is that the coordinated efforts undertaken by the United Nations agencies, in particular UNICEF, the global agency for children, and Governments of Member States, and the initiatives by the members of civil society, particularly the non-governmental organizations, have set an example of how the international community can be mobilized for the welfare and well-being of children. That is what we call the grand alliance for children. This testifies to the fact that given political will and appropriate mobilization we can have an impact on the future of this world.

Improving the conditions of children is closely linked with overall societal progress. It is said that poverty has a feminine face. We say it has the face of children as well. When the mother is struggling with poverty, children are definitely the victims. In addition, children, as the most vulnerable section of the society, remain at the receiving end of every onslaught of poverty. Therefore, any efforts directed at improving the condition of children has a societal dimension, and this needs to be appreciated properly. We are happy that the report of the Secretary-General has made some significant references to this compulsion.

Conscious of this imperative, successive governments in Bangladesh, in particular the present Government, have pursued rather aggressive strategies to address the problems confronted by children. Bangladesh has become a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which forms the basis of our national activities in this important area. In fact, this element constitutes one of the major components of our struggle to eradicate poverty as well. We fully agree with the Secretary-General when he said during the introduction of his report that this Convention is a social tool to reach the unreached and that investing in children and women is the path to sustainable development.

Our efforts have already started to produce tangible results. In Bangladesh, we have been able to immunize 91 per cent of the children through the extensive network of the Extended Programme of Immunization. The child mortality rate has declined significantly. We are hopeful that we will be able to meet our target in this sector by the end of the decade. As the home of oral rehydration therapy (ORT), Bangladesh has made a notable contribution towards the reduction of death from diarrhoea. We are proud to say that the mortality rate from this tropical disease has dropped significantly in recent years. Nonetheless, our struggle to eliminate this threat completely continues. We have mounted an 18-month communication campaign to boost the level of ORT use from 45 per cent to 80 per cent once and for all at the earliest possible date. More than 55,000 primary school teachers have been engaged in this campaign since 1993.

Primary education is considered to be an essential element in improving the conditions of children. Pursuant to its objective, the Bangladesh Government has made primary and secondary education free for girls in rural areas. Special incentives in the form of "food for education" have been introduced to encourage students, particularly the girl students, to go to school. We are hopeful that through these policies we will be able to empower the girls, which may in the long term help to improve the condition of the poorest section of the population in Bangladesh.

My country has also initiated some imaginative steps to address a child-related issue, which I would like to share with the Assembly. Involvement of children in the work force is a concomitant problem of poverty in many developing countries. We are not immune to this problem either. In order to address the problem in a humane and constructive way, the Bangladesh Government signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Labour Organization and UNICEF last year with a view to eradicating child labour from the garment manufacturing sector. These retrenched child workers will be sent to school and training centres to develop their educational and work skills. This arrangement will be financed jointly by UNICEF and the private garment sector. We hope that this can serve as a model for others facing similar problems in their countries.

We are conscious of our limitations and resource capabilities. Despite the fact that we are devoting more than 40 per cent of our annual budget to the social sector, the magnitude of the problem constantly defies our efforts. We therefore think that the national efforts should be supplemented by regional and global efforts. In order to muster the desired level of resources, efforts must be made to reverse the present downward trend of official development assistance. At the regional level, we have

already adopted a regional plan for South Asia under the Colombo Resolution on Children, which was endorsed by the Seventh Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 1993. We are committed to fulfilling our obligations under this plan and hope that cooperation at the regional level will have more impact on our common efforts to tackle this issue. In particular, we believe that regional cooperation is essential to stop transborder trafficking in children and utilizing them as bonded labour and prostitutes.

I would like to take this opportunity to record the appreciation of the Government of Bangladesh for the constructive engagement of the various United Nations agencies in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh, including efforts to raise the well-being of children. In particular, I would like to commend the support extended to us by UNICEF to improve the conditions of children in Bangladesh. It is our hope that the United Nations development agencies will remain actively engaged with us in our relentless efforts for the eradication of poverty, in which an essential focus remains on the children.

In conclusion, we join with other delegations in fully endorsing the Secretary-General's recommendations for holding a special session of the General Assembly in five years' time to examine the progress made in fulfilling the promises for children. Following the World Summit in 1990, we in Bangladesh strongly hope that the year 2000 will see the second summit level gathering on children in this body.

Mrs. Castro de Barish (Costa Rica) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The protection and support of children has always been part of Costa Rica's social policy. That goal was established in the 1920s with the creation as a government agency of the National Board for Children, which is still very active today.

Like all the delegations that have participated in the debate on agenda item 100, we also wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report he has presented to us (A/51/256) with regard to progress at mid-decade on implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/217 on the World Summit for Children, which my delegation had the honour to co-sponsor.

Costa Rica supports the assessments and comprehensive information as well as the realistic conclusions of the report. We welcome its account of the response of the United Nations system, in particular, on the important and fundamental role played by various components of the United Nations system such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). WHO developed health-related goals in collaboration with the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy, while UNESCO and UNICEF collaborated on complementary activities in the educational sector through the Joint Committee on Education and the Conference on Education for All held in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand. We wish also to stress the importance of the Education Summit held in New Delhi with the support of UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP in the joint project on "Education for All: Making it Work". Undoubtedly, this is an example of joint action that can serve as a model and yield very valuable and positive results. We support the statement that any substantial plan to reduce illiteracy among adults must begin by effectively improving primary education for the benefit of children who will, otherwise, be the adult illiterates of tomorrow.

Costa Rica endorses the observation of Nicaragua concerning mobilization of resources since, indeed, until greater efforts are made to achieve mobilization of additional resources, it will not be possible for developing countries to promote the proposed goals. The report recognizes that only an average of 12 per cent of national budgets is earmarked for basic social services. Clearly, in many developing countries, structural adjustments have not always had a human face.

My delegation wishes to stress the conclusion in paragraph 285 of the report that:

> "The goals established at the 1990 World Summit for Children have had an extraordinary mobilizing power, generating a renewed level of activity on behalf of children around the world and creating new partnerships between Governments, non-governmental organizations, donors, the media, civil society and international organizations in pursuit of a common purpose. There is a wealth of evidence to show that the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action, together with the almost simultaneous passage into international law of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, provided the impetus and the legal framework for galvanizing global action behind the cause of children." *(A/51/256, para. 285)*

My delegation wishes to stress here the well-being of girls, since it has been demonstrated that the situation of

girls is even more precarious than that of boys in all circumstances of life.

With regard to progress made in reaching the goals in the Latin American and Caribbean region, we note with great interest the information provided in the regional overview, notably on achieving universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at mid-decade. My country has adapted its national legislation on protection and promotion of the rights of children in order to fulfil the commitments assumed as a State party to the Convention. Costa Rica some years ago established the office of ombudsman, whose role is to defend the rights of all people whether they are citizens of the country or residents of any nationality or origin.

Returning to the report, we note that efforts at the international level to achieve universal ratification by the end of the decade have been less successful but, nevertheless, considerable. My delegation respectfully urges Governments that have not yet signed and/or acceded to the Convention to consider doing so in order to make universal ratification a splendid reality as we approach the year 2000.

In annex II of the report, which indicates the status of signature of the World Summit Declaration, preparation of national programmes of action and ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as of 31 May 1996, we are pleased to note that Latin America and the Caribbean have fully ratified the Convention and signed the Summit Declaration, and virtually all the States parties have completed their national plans of action.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity cordially and respectfully to urge States parties to the Convention that have not yet done so to respond favourably to the request addressed to them by the Secretary-General under article 50 of the Convention, which provides that an amendment adopted in accordance with paragraph 1 of that article shall enter into force when it has been approved by the General Assembly and accepted by a two-thirds majority of the States parties to the Convention. The States parties have already adopted the amendment during consideration of the recommendation at the Conference of States parties to the Convention on 12 December 1995. The Assembly later gave its approval on 21 December 1995. Costa Rica's amendment consists of replacing the word "ten" by the word "eighteen" in article 43, paragraph 2, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and it was approved without a vote. The Secretary-General's letter containing his request to States parties to the Convention was sent on 29 March 1996. Accordingly, my Government would be most grateful to the Governments of States parties to the Convention for their valuable support for this amendment, whose purpose is to endow the Committee on the Rights of the Child with eight experts in addition to those it now has in order to carry out the multiple aspects of its mandate. Let us not forget what James Grant, the late Executive Director of UNICEF always used to say: "Children first".

Mr. Kiwanuka (Uganda): I should like to start by thanking the Secretary-General for the report on progress at mid-decade on implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/217 on the World Summit for Children. Six years ago, Heads of State and Government assembled in this Hall adopted a World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and a Plan of Action for its implementation. This was only the beginning of a series of global United Nations summits and conferences which will culminate with the World Food Summit in Rome next month. The deliberations of all these meetings have helped to redefine thinking on human development, to further attempts at achieving a qualitative difference to the lives of people and, not least, to reaffirm the commitment to the needs of children.

Although progress towards achievement of the goals we set ourselves for the survival, protection and development of all children has been uneven throughout the world, it is gratifying to note that programmes of action for children are being implemented in 155 countries. What is equally significant is that 187 States, including Uganda, have now ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The challenge now is for Governments to ensure implementation of the obligations undertaken under the Convention.

My delegation appreciates the positive trends reported by the Secretary-General to improve the prospects of survival and the lives of children worldwide. Encouraging progress has been made in immunization and the eradication of guinea-worm disease. We commend also the great efforts made to address iodine deficiency, promote oral rehydration programmes and improve access to safe water.

Unfortunately, as the report indicates, there appears to be slower progress in reaching the goals in sub-Saharan Africa, where there are still difficulties in achieving optimum improvements in the quality of nutrition, reducing maternal mortality and providing access to basic education, particularly for girls. Sub-

Saharan Africa is still too vulnerable to drought, environmental degradation and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, together with disruptions caused by armed conflict.

It is not possible to discuss the implementation of the decisions of the Summit for Children without acknowledging the important role that UNICEF has played and continues to play. Indeed, we note with satisfaction that Ms. Bellamy, its Executive Director, has made the implementation of the Summit for Children one of its main activities. The Fund has done important work in providing assistance to countries, including Uganda, in the preparation of national programmes of action for children and their subsequent implementation, particularly in the area of coordination and monitoring and the development of inter-agency cooperation in the field to improve girls' education and mitigate the consequences of female illiteracy in our region.

In the opinion of the Ugandan delegation, the results of the mid-decade review and the national reports prepared by many countries should be used widely by UNICEF in accentuating its targets for the period up to the year 2000 and thus influence the operationalization of country activities.

The Government of Uganda, for its part, is about to embark on the implementation of its pledge to provide free primary education for four children per family. Uganda commends the measures adopted at the Consensus of Dakar (June 1993), which were the outcome of the 1992 International Conference for Assistance to the African Child, and reaffirms that it still remains the principal point of reference for follow-up to the World Summit for Children in sub-Saharan Africa. The participating countries, including Uganda, committed themselves to translate the goals of the Summit into concrete national programmes of action. Nevertheless, we are aware that there have been shortfalls that are concealed by misleading national averages, as a result of the difficulties and contrasts of major social disparities and the children who are victims of exploitation, of physical and emotional violence, and of abandonment and injustice.

Uganda therefore reaffirms its commitment to share the responsibility for ensuring the survival, protection and development of all children and taking note of the Secretary-General's proposal to hold an end-of-decade review meeting to examine the fulfilment of the "promises to children". It is in that spirit that we anticipate more progress on child survival and great improvement in their quality of life.

Agenda item 45 *(continued)*

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/348)

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana): At the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in March 1995, world leaders took tough political decisions and committed themselves to create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that would enable people to achieve social development and social justice. They recognized the significance of human well-being for all and agreed to give the highest priority to the achievement of these goals now and into the twenty-first century.

In December 1995, this Assembly initiated the debate on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. For the second year running, this item has been inscribed on our agenda, underlining the importance that we all attach to the implementation of the outcome of the Conference. In this connection, my delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The World Summit for Social Development is one of a number of world conferences which began in 1990 with the World Summit for Children and ended recently in June 1996 with the Istanbul Conference on Human Settlements. Organized under the auspices of the United Nations, these global conferences have focused attention on the complex phenomenon of development in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, legal and related fields in a holistic manner. With the disappearance of East-West ideologies and North-South confrontations, the potential for cooperation and the forging of a sense of partnership to seek global solutions to world problems have gained heightened awareness and have made all this achievement possible.

Benefiting from this new sense of responsibility and solidarity within and between nations, the World Summit for Social Development agreed on 10 major commitments around the overall theme of poverty eradication, full employment and social integration. In addition, the Summit came up with a Programme of Action that outlined the policies and actions required to implement the principles and fulfil the commitments agreed to in Copenhagen.

We are also mindful of the ground-breaking strategies the Summit adopted to assign specific responsibilities for actions to fully implement all of its commitments and objectives. Thus while it acknowledged that individual countries bear the primary responsibility for the attainment of the goals of the conference, it also recognized that the support of the international community as a whole — including of the United Nations system, the multilateral financial institutions, bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations and all actors of civil society — will be crucial if we are to realize all the objectives of the conference.

It is too early at this stage to attempt to take stock of what has been achieved so far in terms of implementing the outcome of the Summit. Suffice it to say that my delegation is satisfied to see and learn about the various initiatives and engagements of all countries, large and small, rich and poor, as well as those of the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and actors of civil socicty in general, to implement the commitments.

My own country, for instance, has established a National Development Planning Commission that is charged with implementing and monitoring the Government's macroeconomic and sectoral policies to ensure broad-based sustained economic growth and equitable and sustainable development that meets the aspirations of all members of our society. A comprehensive development policy document, "Ghana Vision 20-20: The First Step", placed before Parliament recently, has been fully debated; its provisions are being translated into a national programme of action or reference document that will inform the entire governmental structure, non-governmental organizations and the international community of the enabling environment established for the country's priority social and economic activities. Our programme of action places a great deal of emphasis on national coordination mechanisms, capacity-building and the mobilization of internal and external resources to ensure its effective implementation.

At the international level, even though official development assistance continues to decline in real terms, certain countries have raised their level of assistance in support of social development. In this connection, it is pertinent to mention the recent meeting held in Oslo in April 1996 on the implementation of the 20/20 initiative, according to which interested developed- and developing-country partners will allocate 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes. It is also encouraging to note that at the annual meeting of the Bretton Woods institutions a few days ago, some encouraging decisions were taken to address not only the issues of debt, but also the overall financial and resource problems of developing countries, and to ensure that structural adjustment programmes will be carried out in a human-centred manner.

By far the greatest impetus and momentum given to the implementation of the outcome of the world social Summit has come from the United Nations itself. Since 1995, our Organization has assumed a true leadership role in the follow-up to the Summit — and, indeed, in the follow-up to all the other reinforcing global conferences it organized — by assigning responsibilities to what has come to be called lead United Nations agencies, which monitor specific task forces that have been set up to implement the outcome of the various conferences.

Having declared 1996 the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, the General Assembly has taken measures to review progress towards poverty eradication and to provide policy guidelines to encourage further actions in this regard. The recent mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the launching in March 1996 of the Secretary-General's Special Initiative on Africa must be seen in this light. The Economic and Social Council has, since its 1995 substantive session, and in particular its 1996 substantive session, intensified its dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions and other specialized agencies of the United Nations in support of a coordinated implementation of economic and social development programmes. Furthermore, the Economic and Social Council has gone beyond this to involve all its functional and subsidiary bodies — and in particular the Commission for Social Development — in the Conference follow-up.

All these actions and measures assure us that we are on the right path, even if there is still a long way to go to achieve the goals and objective agreed upon by our leaders in Copenhagen. We need to continue to invest in the implementation process the same political will that characterized the agreements reached at the Summit. The reforms in the United Nations system as a whole should be seen as part of this overarching desire to equip our Organization so that it will be better able to discharge its obligations under the Charter, not only to maintain world peace and security but also to promote social progress and greater freedom for all in such a manner that the human person becomes the central object of our collective endeavours and attention.

Ms. Gordon (Jamaica): I wish to express my Government's support for the statement made yesterday by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and to join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for the report contained in document A/51/348.

The report is very thorough in its description of follow-up activities undertaken by Governments and by the entire United Nations system since the General Assembly's adoption last year of a resolution on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. As described by the Secretary-General, there has been a great effort to implement the provisions of the resolution and to consolidate joint activities on the part of the United Nations bodies engaged in the follow-up process. My delegation wishes to highlight specifically the recent decisions taken by the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council concerning the future organization of their work in connection with their respective roles in the implementation process.

In this respect, the elaboration by the Commission of its agenda and multi-year work programme for 1997 to 2000 demonstrates a keen commitment and willingness to begin to fulfil its expanded mandate. Likewise, Jamaica wishes to endorse the resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during its recent substantive session, particularly on the follow-up to the World Summit and on the future role of the Commission for Social Development.

We could not agree more with the concern expressed by the Economic and Social Council for mainstreaming the gender perspective in United Nations activities for poverty eradication, and for taking a harmonized and integrated approach to intergovernmental consideration of poverty eradication.

Jamaica, like other Member States, participated actively in the World Summit for Social Development and fully endorsed the fundamental principles embodied in the Copenhagen Declaration. We are fully conscious, however, that the true measure of our commitment must be demonstrated in concrete actions.

In this connection, some 60 programmes contributing towards poverty reduction are currently being spearheaded by Jamaican Government ministries. In addition, several non-governmental organizations as well as multilateral and bilateral donors, have been contributing to the poverty-reduction process by initiating or sponsoring a range of projects in Jamaica.

It should be emphasized that the cornerstone of Jamaica's poverty-reduction efforts is human-resource development. The human-resource development programme, which consists mainly of investment and policy reforms in education and health, represents the strongest expression of the Jamaican Government's intention to alleviate poverty through investment in human capital.

In keeping with its commitment to ensuring a strengthened framework for national, regional and international cooperation for social development, Jamaica has instituted definite planning, implementation and monitoring systems as part of its follow-up to the Summit. These include: first, the establishment of a national committee, headed by the Minister responsible for social development, to monitor implementation of a national plan of action; secondly, the launching of the national poverty-alleviation programme; thirdly, the involvement of civil society through a social-partnership approach; fourthly, fostering social integration through the recognition of the role of the family in social stability; and, lastly, employment generation through labour-market reform.

The response of the Jamaican people, including elements of the private sector, to these initiatives has been very positive. There appears to be a collective recognition of the urgency with which the issues of poverty and social development need to be addressed in my country.

We cannot overemphasize the vulnerability of the economies of small States such as those in our subregion. Caribbean economies remain severely hampered by the external-debt burden, unfair terms of trade, wide disparities in income distribution and threats posed by international drug trafficking, among other factors. Structural-adjustment policies adopted since the 1980s have eroded many of the earlier gains made in the social sector, and it is partly these deficiencies that Caribbean Governments, including my own, hope to address by the adoption of our respective social-development programmes. It is recognized, however, that these very programmes are often quite ambitious in their scope and in what they seek to achieve. Their implementation, therefore, presents a further strain in the short term on the already burdened State machineries of Caribbean Governments.

In this connection, it has long been recognized that there is a correspondingly urgent need for the

mobilization of resources to assist national poverty-eradication/social-development programmes. We therefore look forward to the presentation at next year's substantive session of the Economic and Social Council of the Secretary-General's report on all aspects of new and innovative ideas for generating funds for globally agreed commitments and priorities, particularly those established at recent United Nations conferences and summit meetings.

On a similar point, my Government wishes to restate its concern that there is need for the scientific community to be further sensitized to the crucial importance of science and technology in contributing to poverty eradication and social development.

In conclusion, Jamaica wishes to reiterate its appreciation to the relevant agencies of the United Nations system for their responsiveness to the various Government initiatives in the area of social development. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), to name but a few, have all participated strategically in national consultations and have made both financial and human resources available to the Government of Jamaica. They have played a key role in facilitating collaboration with multilateral financial institutions in mobilizing support for poverty-alleviation initiatives.

Despite some persistent problems, my Government remains firmly committed to the implementation of the Summit commitments. We have no choice. We look forward to continued dialogue with our partners in the international arena on ways and means of achieving global solutions to the myriad problems that we face in the area of social development, including poverty eradication.

Ms. Ramírez (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: My delegation takes special interest in speaking in the debate on agenda item 45, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development".

United Nations concern for social development is nothing new. Suffice it to recall the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, the International Development Strategy and the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, which was adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly.

These earlier steps led to the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, demonstrating once again that the international community is truly attempting to deal with the most serious social problems by proposing innovative methods and approaches.

We are especially grateful for the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/348), which gives us a compendium of the initiatives taken by national Governments, the measures adopted by the United Nations, the activities of the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, the mobilization of financial resources and the participation by civil society and other elements.

At the meeting of the Commission for Social Development held last May, my country spoke about a topic that deserves special attention, namely, the eradication of poverty. On that occasion, we noted that the subject is one of extraordinary magnitude and implications, that it is growing worldwide and that it is one of the more complicated items in the social agenda.

In Argentina, favourable economic trends led to a significant increase in gross domestic product in the early months of this year. There are also concrete economic factors and developments that can be viewed as positive gains in the struggle against poverty. Minimal inflation, made and planned investments, increases in exports that will further promote productivity and employment — all these tend to confirm this trend.

We are aware that much remains to be done, and therefore my Government's activities, principally through the Secretariat of State for Social Development and with the cooperation of provincial and local authorities, have been stepped up and expanded in recent years.

Thus, we have implemented a broad-based social policy that includes support for housing construction, the provision of emergency food assistance to the needy and meals for children, and the promotion of community activities, along with various types of family assistance, and productive activities for workers in specific areas.

We have set up a social-information base in order better to monitor and systematically analyse the status of poverty in Argentina. This has served as a means of focusing social programmes and has helped in evaluating the before-and-after performance of those directed especially to the poor.

Through the participatory fund for social investment, we have established machinery for financing

community initiatives in the poorest parts of the country. We have created social-development programmes along border areas, thereby improving their inhabitants' quality of life. Likewise, we have developed programmes for neighbourhood improvement and for assistance to especially vulnerable children.

These actions are being taken in keeping with two essential elements: first, greater emphasis on education, since, in the final analysis, poverty cannot truly be eliminated without effective education; and secondly, a reform of the State that promotes investment so that economic growth can lower the unemployment rate. These two elements are truly the only substantive approaches to eradicating poverty. All these actions are being pursued in a framework of good governance and austerity.

On a regional level, our firm commitment to fulfil the agreements of the World Summit led to the Summit Meeting of the Rio Group in Buenos Aires, from which emerged the Buenos Aires declaration on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. We also proposed a temporary secretariat for the convening of a technical meeting to develop an operational plan. The goal of that meeting, held in Quito, Ecuador, was to establish machinery among the Rio Group member countries for following up on the decisions reached at Buenos Aires. Jointly with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Organization of American States, we also held in Buenos Aires an American technical seminar on programmes to overcome poverty. That meeting took place within the framework of the proposed work plan. Finally, I should like to highlight the initiative to send a group of "White Helmets" to work jointly with the countries requiring them for the production of food, food aid and assistance in general.

All these activities, together with Argentina's contributions to the various funds that, directly or indirectly, have an impact on the eradication of poverty, and with the work of many non-governmental organizations and private entities, are testimony to our intense and sustained national commitment. According to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) *Human Development Report*, Argentina ranks sixth among developing countries and thirtieth among United Nations Members. This provides an even stronger impetus for persevering and forging ahead.

The eradication of poverty occupies a central place on Argentina's agenda. We have taken effective action for its eradication on various levels, because we know that poverty degrades and diminishes human beings, and our commitment is to the human being.

Mr. Meléndez-Barahona (El Salvador) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I have the honour to make the following statement on agenda item 45, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development", on behalf of the Central American countries: Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and El Salvador. Central America shares and supports the criteria set forth in the statement made yesterday by Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, we wish to express our deepest sympathy at the disaster that occurred yesterday in the sisterly Republic of Guatemala, in which some 79 people died and many others were wounded when a sporting event turned tragic. This sad event has touched both Central America and the world of sports.

In the context of the other world conferences the United Nations has held in recent years, the convening of the world social Summit in Copenhagen, Denmark, in March 1995, was a historic political achievement. At that event Heads of State or Government acknowledged the importance of social development and human well-being. They reviewed the various factors that affect the achievement of social-development goals as well as the pressing need to achieve consensus on national, regional and international measures and machinery to resolve the urgent social problems that seriously challenge the international community.

The convening of that important Summit is testimony to the globalization that has occurred, a process that has given rise to universal understanding and awareness, as well as the commitment and political will to redefine the paradigms of development. This process takes account of the past and present realities that characterize the prevailing international system, a system that places the human being at the centre of development and that recognizes that our economies must be more effectively reoriented to respond to the needs of peoples. We must emphasize that this needs to take place in a context in which social and economic development, environmental protection, and peace and democracy are interdependent, mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development.

Central America accepted the changes in the global situation with optimism, especially with respect to the expectations that have arisen for the creation of a new international system characterized by solidarity and cooperation among States. In that context, we supported the holding of the World Social Summit and of other world conferences, because we believe that the problems of development, viewed comprehensively and from the perspective of sustainability, present the greatest challenge to our societies. This is due to their close interrelationship with peace, stability, democracy and human well-being. Despite this positive outlook, however, we recognize that the less developed nations throughout the world must still overcome considerable and serious obstacles in order to surmount the structural causes of backwardness and promote sustainable development, and that they are negatively affected by changes in the international order. These changes have increased vulnerability, insecurity and uncertainty in many of our countries, especially because our domestic conditions are not adapted to the requirements of changing technology and competition that must be met in order for us to become part of the global economy. The less developed nations must face this challenge with resolve.

We cannot ignore the fact that the gap between the developed and the developing countries has been widening, not narrowing. Most developing countries still can only aspire to make progress in such campaigns as those against poverty, unemployment, the spread of disease, environmental risks, arms and drug trafficking, money laundering and terrorism, as well as campaigns to empower women and consolidate democracy and sustainable development. This is due not only to the scarce and limited resources available, but also to the exhaustion of development cooperation funds.

The international community has, in recent years, witnessed changes and advances in the political, economic and social spheres of Central America. With the help of international cooperation, we have overcome severe crises. These joint efforts have shifted from the political-economic sphere to the socio-economic sphere, giving greater impetus to the establishment of a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development. Making progress in these areas and consolidating that already made is closely linked to the implementation of the commitments set forth in our regional development strategy. This strategy, devised by the Central American presidents in the Alliance for Sustainable Development, encompasses human development, economic growth and environmental sustainability. It is an initiative aimed at redefining the Central American development model by revitalizing our relationships with the international community and renewing our involvement in a globalized, interdependent world economy. The implementation of this strategy is based not only on the signatory States' taking greater responsibility, but also on the assistance of extra-regional partners that are concerned about the development of the subregion and wish to provide financial support to the initiative and share some responsibility for its implementation. In 1994 the United States of America became the first such partner when it signed the joint United States-Central America declaration.

We also believe it is important to point out that for the foundations of the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America to become a reality we must make the greatest efforts in the region to overcome the major obstacles of extreme poverty and poverty in general. We must have human resources that are well trained at all levels so that the majority of the population — especially the most vulnerable sectors — will have access to health and sanitation services.

We must foster and strengthen democratic participation in the political sphere to develop, through a sharing of responsibility between the State, local government and civil society, a model of unified efforts for social development.

Central America is currently promoting policies that stress social development, particularly to reduce poverty, create jobs and promote productive employment. At the same time, it is evaluating and reformulating commitments in keeping with the realities of our countries, in order to develop strategic plans in priority areas, seek sources of financing for their implementation and allocate responsibility to the governmental bodies entrusted with their implementation. This includes efforts to achieve real coordination between the agencies of the United Nations system that cooperate in the formulation and the implementation of development plans at the national level.

We are grateful for the Secretary-General's report (A/51/348) on the agenda item under consideration. It presents an encouraging view of the feasibility of applying the results of the World Summit for Social Development. This can be inferred from the positive responses of Governments and international institutions with regard to the importance of the Summit and its follow-up.

It is important to maintain the momentum that began at Copenhagen in order to proceed progressively towards the goals of eradicating absolute poverty, reducing general poverty and increasing employment and social integration in each national context.

In reviewing the report of the Secretary-General, we wish to emphasize some of its aspects.

The initiatives of Austria and Denmark deserve our support. Their results make possible a better understanding of the problems of social development.

We welcome with interest the Declaration of the Group of Seven industrialized Powers, which was adopted at their meeting in France this year, in which we should highlight the offers to create a new global partnership for development, to cooperate towards achieving greater effectiveness in multilateral institutions and to provide the necessary support for development.

Special attention is warranted by the proposals of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development on a global partnership for development to achieve specific goals in the social sphere, and by the 20/20 initiative, which gives priority to basic social services for the vulnerable sectors of the population, a matter on which the Ambassador of Norway spoke more fully yesterday. Both of these proposals are consistent with the basic goals of the World Summit for Social Development. We believe, however, that they should be examined in depth so that we can have a more detailed understanding of them and determine how viable they are as part of national programmes for social development. This should be done in keeping with the priorities set by individual Governments — especially in developing countries — so that there will be coordination and consistency between international efforts and those of the Governments concerned.

We are optimistic that the globalization process and interdependence will lead to a better understanding and to international solidarity that will improve the trends in official development assistance and gradually achieve the donor community's agreed goal of providing 0.7 per cent of gross national product for that purpose, in fulfilment of the promises made at Copenhagen. We also hope to see an increase in the financing of development programmes, which are necessary to achieve the goals of the World Summit for Social Development.

With regard to the operation and cooperation of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations, which play a fundamental role in following up fulfilment of the goals of the Summit, we believe that coordination and consistency in their activities must be enhanced. We should establish a direct and dynamic link with national agencies and the work they do in each country, in order to evaluate progress in the implementation of the commitments.

One of the immediate goals of the World Summit for Social Development is the eradication of extreme poverty and poverty in general. Poverty affects broad sectors of the world's population and generates despair and social conflict. We believe that in seeking solutions the development of policies to combat poverty must take a number of aspects into account. Among those aspects are the following.

Broad agreements should be reached at national, regional and international levels to put in place a long-term anti-poverty strategy based on a determination of the basic facts and features characterizing poverty.

Poverty has structural roots. Accordingly, we must approach its causes, not simply its effects.

There should be greater understanding of the problem's scope and dimensions, and an open and flexible attitude should be adopted.

Poverty is a massive and chronic phenomenon, especially in developing nations. It calls for greater productivity and the creation of employment.

Economic policy instruments should not exacerbate social conflict, adversely affect the distribution of income or contribute to the spread of poverty among the most vulnerable groups.

Economic strategies aimed at guaranteeing individual liberties, private property and free competition should also have the goals of eradicating poverty and promoting a greater degree of economic democratization.

Priorities should not be exclusively focused on macroeconomic factors or global balance; instead, economic policies should include measures to improve living conditions and economic and social opportunities for the most vulnerable groups.

National redistribution policies should gradually be established. These are necessary in order to break the vicious circle of poverty and should include improvements in health, nutrition, training, food programmes and policies for investing in human capital.

The dynamic redistribution of wealth should improve credit for the production sector, public investment in the productive infrastructure and public social expenditure. It should make possible the development of a policy of rising productivity and economic opportunities for the poor.

There should be greater access to credit for small producers, especially those in the agricultural sector, whose modernization cannot come about through the free working of market mechanisms.

There should be greater technical and financial support for informal activities to improve the institutional environment and stimulate and increase its productive abilities, thus fostering a more integrated economy and social progress.

There should be a realistic re-evaluation of employment and salaries that takes into account the social costs of adjustment problems and their impact on living standards of societies, particularly among the most vulnerable sectors.

Central America is pursuing efforts to promote social development with equity. While recognizing that the primary responsibility to achieve the goals of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action falls to our Governments, we believe that the importance of cooperation and international assistance to achieve full implementation is beyond question.

The spirit of solidarity, dialogue and cooperation displayed at the World Summit for Social Development should be put into practice in order to create a more favourable international economic environment and promote more effective cooperation. We believe it is indispensable to establish an international strategy based on a new partnership that will make the fulfilment of our commitments viable. That strategy should bear in mind the interests and priorities of developing countries for the solution of their serious problems. This would result in an improvement in social conditions and the elimination of the roots of social tensions and conflicts.

Finally, within the framework of this new partnership it is important that we pursue the process of revitalizing and restructuring the United Nations. We believe that the capacity and efficiency of the Organization need to be enhanced. The Organization needs to be given sufficient financial resources to fulfil its mandate for development and social progress.

We must also stress, however, that by no means should programmes in the economic and social sphere undergo budgetary cuts. International financial institutions should re-evaluate the effects of structural-adjustment policies and the negative consequences of debt servicing in relation to the promotion of sustainable social development on a global scale.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development is a matter of great interest to the Government and people of Guyana. As the Chairman of the Group of 77 stated yesterday, developing countries everywhere have an interest in ensuring that an enabling environment is created both nationally and internationally for social development.

Our own commitment to social development has been clearly demonstrated, not least by our decision, despite limited resources, consistently to increase — both in absolute and percentage terms — that portion of the national budget destined to the social sector, and more particularly to health and education services. The current allocation accounts for some 16 per cent of the 1996 budget and will be increased to 20 per cent in 1997. In so doing, we will have fulfilled our obligations under the 20/20 initiative, to which we fully subscribe.

Our full acceptance of this initiative is less the result of any belief in a magic formula than of our persuasion of the value of people-centred development and of the "Oslo Consensus on 20/20" as a means of achieving that goal. We are convinced that, within the framework of a global partnership for development, most basic social services can be made available to all peoples and the scourge of poverty can be removed from the world.

We are pleased to note that steps have been taken at the intergovernmental level over the past year to follow up the World Social Summit that, in our view, are evidence of the resolve of the international community to honour the Summit commitments. Resolution 50/161, for example, which was adopted by the General Assembly last year, provides a firm basis for further action by Governments and the United Nations system. It also underscored the critical importance of national action and

international cooperation for social development. At the same time, it called for a suitably expanded Commission for Social Development, which, with a membership of 46 States meeting annually instead of biennially, will allow for greater participation in the monitoring of the implementation process. The Commission's role will also be further dynamized through the active involvement of civil society and relevant expert personnel.

The Commission's multi-year programme of work covering the period 1997-2000 will address the themes of productive employment and sustainable livelihoods; promoting the social integration and participation of all people, vulnerable groups and persons; and social services for all. We trust that the deliberations will be directed towards the eradication of poverty, which we consider a matter of urgency. As acknowledged at Copenhagen and oft repeated since, over one billion people in the world today live in unacceptable conditions of poverty, mostly in developing countries, with women and indigenous peoples especially disadvantaged. In Africa, the situation of people living in poverty is expected to worsen in the coming years with the concomitant threat of further instability on that continent. As was decided at the recent substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, there needs to be great coordination of United Nations system activities for poverty eradication, both at the national level and at headquarters. In this regard, the agreed conclusions of the Council on this issue should be fully implemented.

As part of our observance of the International Year and first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, we must actively pursue resolution S-1996/1 on strategies and actions for the eradication of poverty, which was adopted by the Commission for Social Development at its special session in May 1996. In this regard, we believe that the Caribbean Community Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Eradication, which is to be held around 28 October to 1 November in Trinidad and Tobago, will make an important contribution to the follow-up and implementation of this and other resolutions. Under the theme "Taking action on poverty eradication", the Ministers will identify priority action to be taken at the national and regional levels relating to poverty eradication as well as ways and means of enhancing inter-organizational cooperation within the region.

In my own country, the Government has mounted a relentless campaign against poverty. We have attempted to set clear objectives and provide means for their achievement. In this context, we are currently working to establish realistic and measurable targets and to design concrete plans and programmes of action. A national development strategy will soon be finalized to provide the framework for an action plan for poverty alleviation.

Regrettably, however, like so many other developing countries, we find our efforts severely constrained by an onerous debt burden, the servicing of which consumes a good part of national revenue, and by the negative effects of structural adjustment, particularly its impact on social infrastructure, including health, education and welfare provisions. We are therefore understandably anxious for the United Nations system as a whole to have a common understanding of our problems and in particular of the relationship between debt and poverty, between structural adjustment and poverty, and between drugs and poverty.

Against the background of limited resources at the domestic level, particular attention needs urgently to be paid by the United Nations to the mobilization of the substantial new and additional resources required for the full implementation of the commitments issuing from the Summit. We welcome in this regard, the United Nations Development Programme's Poverty Strategies Initiative and the United Nations Trust Fund for the Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development as concrete examples of commitment to supporting the efforts of developing countries. We need, however, to go further and expedite the implementation of existing debt-relief agreements and the negotiation of the further arrangements called for by our Heads of State and Government.

In this context we wish to acknowledge, with appreciation, the recent initiatives announced by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the International Development Association and the Paris Club to help the highly indebted and poorest countries. Still, we must continue to build on the mandate of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/48, regarding new and innovative ways to generate funds.

The search for new and innovative ideas must in no way, however, supplant already existing commitments to the financing of development. Official development assistance remains pivotal to the development of most developing countries, particularly the least developed, which, despite their best efforts, remain economically stagnant.

In conclusion, we believe that our attention must now be focused on operationalizing assistance for efforts

at the country level within the framework of national priorities and programmes through the active support of the United Nations system and the wider international community. For our part, we will continue to do all we can to promote social development, both nationally and internationally, so that when we come to the year 2000 and review the Copenhagen Programme of Action, we will be proud of the progress made.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in March 1995 was an important milestone in the joint international effort to establish a new international order and initiate a new phase in human history.

The lofty ideals of the Summit — the elimination of poverty, full employment and social integration — provided a framework to enable the international community to create a more just, secure and progressive world. My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, which reflected the position of developing countries on matters relating to the follow-up to the international Summit.

Each one of us will have to make efforts to implement the decisions and guidelines laid down at the Copenhagen Summit, in addition to the ambitious targets that it identified. My country believes that there can be no substitute for North-South and South-South cooperation in stemming the deterioration of social and economic conditions and in making the necessary adjustments in the international arena to promote the prosperity and stability of peoples.

We believe that the international community must be thorough and specific in expressing its solidarity with the developing countries in resolving their basic problems. We also believe that assistance given by developed countries to developing countries also benefits the donors and their future generations. For their part, developing countries should not rely solely on aid provided by developed countries; on the contrary, all the actions of the developing countries should reflect the principle of self-sufficiency. Those are the views of my country with regard to international cooperation and the achievement of social development at the international and local levels. Such cooperation should be based on the principles of mutual respect and mutual benefit.

Syria was an effective participant in the debate held at the recent session of the Commission for Social Development. We believe that it is important that every possible effort be made to consolidate and strengthen the Commission so that it can follow up on the results of the World Summit on Social Development at the appropriate level. We believe that the steps taken to expand the Commission and to convene its meetings on an annual basis are in keeping with the ambitions of the international community for the future role and mission of that body.

We would like to confirm the importance of the role of the Bretton Woods institutions in implementing the results of the Social Summit, especially in strengthening programmes for developing countries so that, no longer constrained by unsustainable conditions, they can make further efforts to promote social development and alleviate the debt burden under which many of them suffer.

Given Israel's policies of occupation, my country is obliged to invest greatly in its military technical and human strength. Modern Syria has carried out a very successful social development plan covering all sectors of society, to the extent allowed by our wealth, potential and, in particular, human factors.

I should like to refer to the fact that Syria is one of the 10 leading States in the developing world in the field of economic development, as the 1992 United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report makes clear. Over the past two decades Syria, through the efforts of President Hafez Al-Assad, has been approaching the problem of development essentially by concentrating on the basic target — the individual, the sole object of our efforts. We have therefore ensured that education at all levels and health services are provided free of charge. We have focused especially on the marginalized sectors of the population living under difficult circumstances. In this context, we are particularly concerned about children, the disabled, displaced persons, refugees, orphans, the elderly and others.

Throughout our territory, there are considerable networks of national organizations and associations of benevolent and civil institutions that play a distinctive role in society and freely and effectively participate in social activities for development. Furthermore, the Government of Syria has agreed to implement the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for

Persons with Disabilities, pursuant to resolution 48/96. All the policies that my country is pursuing in this respect have yielded major social accomplishments, and this has been specifically reflected in the standard of living of the majority of our citizens throughout our national territory. It has also resulted in an increase in education and health benefits for people in towns and villages. The level of health care and education has been enhanced and infant and maternal mortality has been reduced. This is part of a plan to foster national integration and to ensure opportunities for productive employment, with the aim of eliminating unemployment.

In the Syrian Golan, however, where many Syrians have had to leave their villages, work places and schools, the Israeli occupation has for more than a quarter of a century imposed a heavy burden on Syrian efforts to bring about social and economic development in the country. This occupation has increased the obstacles to our efforts to produce a higher standard of living.

Foreign occupation is a tremendous hindrance to our efforts for social development. Israel is occupying our territory and flagrantly violating the human rights of Arabs living under the yoke of its occupation. Israel is pursuing systematic policies aimed at distorting our national identity and pillaging our resources by destroying houses, confiscating lands and acting against our citizens.

The time that has elapsed since the World Summit for Social Development may seem brief, but my country has been working on genuine social development for over two decades. My country has attached particular importance to the results of the World Summit. A world free of colonialism, foreign occupation and aggression, and protected from the threat of racial hegemony, expansionism or colonization is the necessary precursor of a world free of poverty, injustice and oppression, in which relations are more democratic, humane, secure and stable for the well-being of one and all.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: Kuwait has always attached particular importance to the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, where Kuwait was represented at the Summit by His Highness the Emir. The Summit led to the revitalization of the Commission for Social Development to follow up on the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

Permanence is the characteristic feature of Kuwait's efforts in the areas of social development, human settlements and administrative policies, as well as in measures to encourage the private sector, within the framework of the economic and social development process for the years 1995-1996 and up to the year 2000. The basic aim of these planning and development efforts is to make the citizens of Kuwait productive and to improve the human and cultural dimensions of society.

Social development in Kuwait is covered by several education, cultural, information and social welfare programmes that enhance the participation of citizens in various areas of social activity. These programmes also promote the role of women as the mothers of future generations, without reducing their role in the workforce, while strengthening programmes of social welfare with a special emphasis on children, adolescents and marginalized groups. Of particular importance are measures to manage and coordinate volunteer activities between the Government and national institutions, as well as those that foster cooperation and rationalization. People can thereby participate in the social sector to improve health services, focus on problems of consumption and production and help to offset unfortunate trends in those particular areas.

To that end, Kuwait has created machinery that has had an important impact on achieving the goals of social development. Government annual expenditure in that sector reached 53.5 per cent of gross national product in the 1980s, 108 per cent in the period 1990-1993, and nearly 82 per cent in 1993. This was due to the financial and economic costs of reconstruction after the liberation of Kuwait in February 1991, as well as to the efforts of the State to continue to finance social services.

Before the discovery of oil on its territory, Kuwait met the challenges of life under extremely difficult economic conditions, which is why we are very aware of the problems being faced by developing countries. Since Kuwait has achieved a surplus from its oil earnings, it can now participate in social and economic development activities. Part of our assistance to developing countries is in the form of loans and grants made through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, which was created in 1961 to implement development programmes and economic and social programmes in Arab and Muslim countries, as well as other fraternal and friendly countries. As of 1994, that Fund had granted 445 individual loans to the amount of 2.22 billion dinars. Through non-governmental organizations in Kuwait and through projects drawn up by those organizations, Kuwait has been able to demonstrate the human dimension of its

assistance. The rate of assistance provided by Kuwait was 4.4 per cent of the gross national product in the 1980s.

Although Kuwait is a donor and creditor country, we are aware of the problems faced by developing countries in the area of social development, and in particular from the debt burden. That is why Kuwait has made an appeal to all donors to forgive part of their debts and to write off some of their interest to the benefit of the poorest countries. This was clearly reflected in the statement of Mr. Al-Sabah to the General Assembly on 28 September 1988, when he said that Kuwait was ready to cancel the debts of those countries. This is testimony to Kuwait's pioneering efforts on behalf of international development.

We welcome the role being played by the Commission for Social Development in the Copenhagen Programme of Action, the main elements of which are to be implemented in coming years. We wish to reaffirm our sincere commitment to cooperating with the Commission in order to achieve the targets set in Copenhagen, as well as implementing the Programme of Action.

My delegation would also like to emphasize the importance of the efforts being made by the regional economic commissions in following up on the results of the Social Summit. In particular, we point to the efforts of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. Efforts are being made, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization, to design profiles for poverty- alleviation policies in four sectors: health, education, employment and fiscal policy. As regards social integration in Lebanon, we must define precise measures for achieving the social development objectives specified for that country.

My delegation would like to commend the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to support national activities to promote follow-up to the Copenhagen Programme of Action and its assistance to national programmes in creating favourable conditions for the implementation of national poverty-eradication plans and strategies. It is our hope that UNDP will be able to implement the 42 proposals that have been approved for funding under the Poverty Strategies Initiative.

My delegation would like to reiterate its intention fully to cooperate, through the Kuwaiti National Committee, in the follow-up to the Copenhagen Programme of Action and the decisions taken at that Summit.

Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to extend our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his informative report, contained in document A/51/348 and entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". My delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Nineteen months have elapsed since the successful convening of the World Summit at Copenhagen, where the Heads of State and Government carefully examined the grave social problems facing humanity at large. Amongst other ills, poverty, unemployment and deteriorating social integration — which had already been identified as the most acute problems threatening the well-being and prosperity of the world community — were at the top of the Summit's agenda. They were duly and comprehensively addressed by the participants who, at the conclusion of the Summit, committed themselves to according the highest priority to national, regional and international policies and actions for the promotion of social progress worldwide. This commitment entailed, *inter alia*, the realization of justice for all and the betterment of the human condition in an environment conducive to participation by all.

Now, at this follow-up phase, we need to utilize the opportunity provided to take stock of both the achievements and progress made and of the shortcomings and failures encountered. Thus, a thorough evaluation and an objective assessment of international endeavours and national initiatives is in order if we are determined to ensure an effective and coordinated follow-up to the commitments undertaken at the Summit.

Let us begin by reviewing the concrete measures taken at the international level to achieve the main goals of the Summit: the eradication of poverty, the expansion of productive employment and the enhancement of social integration.

It goes without saying that unrelenting poverty is the most serious problem facing humankind today. For developing countries, it is aggravated by debt burdens, widespread unemployment, deepening environmental crises, lack of adequate international aid and deterioration in the trade environment due to the protectionist policies of certain States. We strongly believe that a renewed and focused commitment to international cooperation is an imperative if we are to ease poverty globally. We may recall that, although the Social Summit acknowledged that

the primary responsibility to attain the goals set out in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action rests with national Governments, it also emphasized the importance of support and contributions from the international community, the United Nations and multilateral financial institutions.

One of the commitments made at the Summit was to mobilize new and additional financial resources that are adequate, predictable and mobilized to maximize the availability of such resources. Subsequently the Commission for Social Development, at its special session in 1996, reiterated that commitment by calling for the implementation of agreed measures to eradicate poverty and for strengthened international cooperation.

Nevertheless, we have noted with concern certain indicators that point to a contrary trend. Apart from some actions taken by relevant bodies of the United Nations, there is little substantive international cooperation in this respect. In paragraph 34 of the Secretary-General's report, we read that

> "the Council expressed concern at the decline in concessional resources for multilateral development institutions, which makes it more difficult for them to respond to the massive challenge of assisting countries in poverty eradication." *(A/51/348, para. 34)*

In light of the preceding observations — all of which tend to point to the responsibility of the international community to generate a substantial increase in the flow of external resources for poverty eradication — we now need to raise the question as to whether the international community, particularly multilateral financial institutions, are willing to play their role and to take action in this regard.

Addressing the question of debt reduction or cancellation, identified in the Secretary-General's report in paragraph 19, has been stressed as one of the main prerequisites for the implementation of the goals of the Summit. It goes without saying that the main responsibility here rests first with the developed countries. It should be emphasized, however, that the developing countries are not looking for hand-outs; rather they are calling for fair play in the world economy and honest observance of the rules of the game. Genuine competition and laying the foundations for a market economy are effectively hampered by the ever-growing burdens of protectionism. A reversal of protective trade policies as well as the removal of obstacles for the smooth and unhindered transfer of technology are among the priority areas requiring action.

The problems of unemployment and underemployment must be tackled at two levels. At the global level, dismantling of trade barriers by developed countries, flow of financial resources and investment to developing nations, transfer of technology, alleviation of the debt burden and sharing experiences can play an important role. Although most countries follow economic policies based on market forces, the attainment of reasonable development seems to be out of reach, if not impossible. Many developing countries have adopted and implemented structural adjustment policies, improved the overall level of management and committed themselves to combat internal corruption; despite all that, their development is still arrested. Many of these countries have opted for the free-market-economy solution only to be disillusioned by the obliterating impact of an unfavourable international environment.

On the home front, supporting the private and informal sectors, promotion of self-employment, provision of credit facilities to the unemployed, encouraging the creation of volunteer organizations including grass-roots financial organizations, investment in training and education programmes, optimal use of resources such as land and water, expansion of labour-intensive economic activities and a focus on the service sector are among the necessary first steps.

It has been strongly suggested that prescriptions designed to realize national social integration should also be applied at the international level. To this end, each State should have an equitable and fair share in shaping the international economic, social and political order. We need to forge a rule-based system of international relations in which might and wealth do not generate rights and in which principles of international law are fully observed. The coercive economic measures and unilateral actions used by certain States against developing countries are inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter and also contradict the Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development which, *inter alia*, requires States to refrain from any unilateral measure not in accordance with international law and the Charter or that creates obstacles to trade relations among States. Such measures are aimed at imposing the will of one State on others, and consequently impede the natural process of social development in developing countries. I would like to emphasize that promotion of respect for the rule of law

by all States, big and small, and for the priority of multilateralism and not unilateral actions, are the hallmarks of our shrinking world. This is an approach that serves the interests of the international community as a whole.

We also learn, from paragraph 22 of the report, of some views of leaders of the Group of Seven industrialized countries, reflected in the final communiqué from their most recent meeting at Lyon, France. While that communiqué, among other things, calls for strengthening economic and monetary cooperation and for the provision of necessary multilateral support for development, it is astonishing to witness how one of the members of that group, in total disregard of those stated purposes, which are relevant issues to the follow-up of the Copenhagen Summit, and in pursuance of its own short-sighted and politically motivated interests, vehemently imposes unilateral coercive measures through the adoption of legislation with extraterritorial effects against other countries. The world community can no longer tolerate this arrogant behaviour and irresponsible attitude, and should react appropriately and swiftly to stop this trend before lawlessness receives de facto recognition.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's development strategies, policy plans and programmes are being reoriented to a people-centred human development approach. In that process, the quality of life of the people has emerged as a new focus of concern. Despite unfavourable external factors, economic hardship and the long-term financial and social implications of hosting 2 million to 4 million refugees for over 17 years, a large portion of total public expenditure has been allocated to social development and poverty alleviation, which has had an effect on social indicators.

Having incorporated these elements into its second five-year national development plan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, in line with its commitments undertaken at the Summit, has embarked upon a wide range of initiatives, some of which can be summarized as follows: a national project for poverty eradication was adopted by our President last month. Identifying economic hardship of the people, creating the appropriate bases and opportunities for full employment of both men and women and addressing the causes of vulnerable social groups, particularly the disabled and elderly, are among its major goals.

To ensure youth the development and welfare, we have established the High Council for Youth. This Council coordinates the activities of other organizations and bodies working for youth, with the aim of identifying priority areas of concern, such as employment, education and leisure time activities.

To further promote the dignity and worthiness of the disabled, a specific department has been set up in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to coordinate and supervise the development of medical and social protective services and to ensure the availability of jobs for the disabled. Furthermore, 10 per cent of overall employment opportunities have been allocated to war veterans and the disabled.

The share of the development budget, in total, increased from 19.4 per cent in 1988-1989 to 38 per cent in 1994-1995, and it is foreseen that the ambitious goal of 48 per cent will be reached in 1996-1997, a step unprecedented throughout the history of Iran's economy.

Major headway has been made in infrastructural development, so that potable water, roads, schools, telephone services, clinics, and other basic services have been brought to thousands of cities, towns and villages, including the remotest areas of the country. At this time, 76 per cent of the population in rural areas have access to proper roads, 74 per cent benefit from electricity, and 86 per cent have access to safe drinking-water. By the end of the second development plan, running from 1995 to 1999, some 98.9 per cent of the urban population will be supplied with sanitary piped water.

Nearly 80 per cent of the rural population and all people in the urban areas have easy and free access to basic health care. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report entitled "Summary of mid-term reviews of country programmes" stated that the multiple indicator cluster survey conducted in September 1995 in the Islamic Republic of Iran

> "confirmed that most of the mid-decade goals have been achieved. Therefore, the focus has now shifted to goals for the end of the decade." *(E/ICEF/1996/P/L.42, para. 30)*

Meanwhile, the Government has taken steps to improve the economic conditions of people in lower income brackets by adopting and implementing different measures such as enforcement of agricultural support programmes through subsidized input and guaranteed price floors for the output, an inflation-adjusted minimum wage for workers in manufacturing, low-priced public utilities for the lower consumption levels, and subsidized housing.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the common responsibilities of all of us — Governments, United Nations bodies, and non-governmental organizations — in ensuring the implementation of the commitments undertaken at the World Summit for Social Development require joint efforts at all levels. In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to continue its active participation in collective endeavours in order to achieve the goals of the Social Summit.

Ms. Thahim (Pakistan): Last year, here at the General Assembly, we proclaimed the critical importance of national and international action for social development. We stressed that for an effective follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, we required renewed political will and the definition of time-bound targets for the eradication of poverty, generation of productive employment and promotion of social integration.

To achieve these objectives, a multi-pronged strategy was adopted. First, Governments were to initiate their efforts with the support of the United Nations, the multilateral financial institutions, regional organizations and all actors of civil society. Second, the United Nations had to launch a three-tiered intergovernmental process. Third, the Commission for Social Development was to be revitalized. Fourth, the Economic and Social Council was to provide overall guidance and to oversee system-wide coordination in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

We must express satisfaction over the impressive progress made towards the achievement of these goals. In this context, we would like to compliment the Secretary-General for presenting a comprehensive report on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. The exhaustive overview in the Secretary-General's report clearly indicates that we have laid down the foundations for concerted and coordinated action.

The goals of the eradication of poverty, reduction of unemployment and expansion of productive employment remain areas of top priority. The policy deliberations in the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council in this regard are very important. Ultimate success will, however, depend on operational programmes being implemented in the countries with the help of United Nations agencies, regional commissions and multilateral financial institutions. The inputs of other functional commissions, particularly the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Population Development, the Statistical Commission and the Commission on Human Rights, are highly valuable. The activities of the regional commissions, however, need to be upgraded.

The follow-up to the Social Summit should not merely lead to a boom in expert meetings. The real objective, namely the alleviation of the suffering of hundreds of millions of people, should not be blurred in a plethora of activities. All initiatives have to remain cost-efficient and should not be bogged down in minutiae. Above all, the goals and targets have to be very realistic. Otherwise, at the end of the first five years, we shall be forced to report a failure.

The United Nations Secretariat has made valuable contributions to the follow-up process. As the Secretary-General's report indicates, during last year the United Nations Secretariat brought out excellent publications on social development. These publications, which provide useful guidelines to decision makers, could be disseminated in a more focused manner. Due regard should be given to their timely transmission to the focal points in missions and capitals.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator's Poverty Strategies Initiative launched early this year has enormous potential. We must fully support this initiative as it holds tremendous promise for the implementation of poverty eradication plans and programmes. The funds allocated to various programmes in different regions are very paltry. At present, they are merely notional and represent just a beginning. In this regard, the UNDP Resident Coordinator system's collaborative follow-up should be further strengthened. Within the existing inter-agency framework, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Bretton Woods institutions can steer the follow-up process from analysis to implementation to monitoring to periodic review.

We welcome the World Bank's decision to expand its work in the areas of social development. The new external financing provided for education, health and nutrition will indirectly contribute towards the eradication of poverty. Direct investment in projects aimed at eliminating poverty will produce quick and tangible results. The increasing attention devoted by the International Monetary Fund to devising measures to protect the most vulnerable segments of society is a step in the right direction. The focus of the World Bank and

IMF on the efficiency of public expenditure is a worthy goal, but one that requires public debate and closer scrutiny.

The time-bound targets in the areas of poverty, primary education, gender equity, health care and sustainable development adopted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries might be unrealistic because they are not matched by any commitment for resources.

The decrease in official development assistance following the Social Summit is disturbing. In his annual report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General has noted that in the last year such assistance declined to 0.27 per cent of gross national product, against the agreed United Nations target of 0.7 per cent. We, however, support the reorientation of official development assistance to development support.

The Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the social Summit cites the overall new income of UNDP. We would have appreciated a clearer correlation of UNDP's new income with the Summit goals, although we do realize that such a breakdown would have been a difficult exercise. We hope that the new funding of $22 billion announced for the International Development Association (IDA) in March of this year will be oriented towards the outcome of the goals of the Social Summit, with particular emphasis on poverty eradication. No meaningful progress has yet been made in the field of new and innovative resources that could ultimately bail the United Nations out of its financial crisis. For independent decision-making, the United Nations needs financial autonomy. We must therefore redouble our efforts to identify new and innovative resources. The problem of the alleviation of the debt-servicing burden is being addressed at a very slow pace.

We must express our satisfaction at the consistent efforts made to establish an effective partnership between Governments and the actors of civil society on the one hand and non-governmental organizations and the United Nations on the other. The 28-year-old Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) was updated this year to ensure, *inter alia*, an enhanced and more meaningful involvement of non-governmental organizations in the implementation of social policies at the national and international levels and in the follow-up to the social Summit. The active participation of non-governmental organizations in the follow-up would go a long way towards guaranteeing the success of our efforts.

The Government of Pakistan actively participated in the preparatory process to the World Summit for Social Development. We are pursuing the goals of the Summit in close cooperation with the United Nations, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and multilateral financial institutions. Pakistan has launched an $8 billion social action programme, which focuses on poverty eradication, basic education, primary health care, nutrition, water supply and sanitation. Within this framework, additional elements related to poverty eradication, the empowerment of women, the generation of employment and environmental protection have been included. Our programmes are being supported by United Nations agencies based in Pakistan, donor countries and the World Bank. The Government of Pakistan is determined to achieve the goals of the Summit by utilizing its own resources. However, such a Herculean task cannot he accomplished without massive investment in human-resource development.

The central plank of our social action programme is the massive spread of primary education, with an acceleration of the enrolment of girls. In one year alone, 10,800 new primary schools have been established; 34,000 new schools are being opened. To achieve our objective of the universalization of primary education by the year 2000, we have increased the allocation of expenditure on education. In this context, special emphasis is being given to female education and health. Some 60 per cent of the funds have been allocated to female literacy, and 70 per cent of the new schools planned over the next three years will be for girls. In addition, under the Prime Minister's national health-workers scheme, 100,000 girls are being trained to provide multiple services encompassing health, education and population welfare.

All of these measures undertaken by the Government of Pakistan require consistent and determined efforts, the participation of the private sector and non-governmental organizations and the enhanced support of the international community. The international efforts should not be limited solely to policy debates, research and data collection. The answer lies in technical cooperation and training programmes at the operational level. Enhanced international technical assistance and advisory services can decisively strengthen national capacities and the institutional bases for supporting national plans and strategies that are designed to bring about sustained and sustainable social development.

In conclusion, I would express the hope that all necessary steps will be taken to build on the elaborate framework put in place by the United Nations, United Nations agencies, Governments and multilateral institutions. Our deep political commitment, clear direction and faithful implementation of the Summit decisions can sustain our efforts.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the members of the European Union. However, I should like to add some comments. At the World Summit for Social Development, all the participants acknowledged that the primary responsibility for attaining the goals set forth in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action rested with national Governments, with the support and contribution of the international community.

Poland welcomes the new framework created by the General Assembly for the activities of the Commission for Social Development as the functional commission with the main responsibility for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development. We are pleased that in the draft resolution it submitted to the Economic and Social Council the Commission recommended a multi-year programme of work to the year 2000. That programme of work covers themes that, in our opinion, are central to social development.

In a world that is changing at extraordinary speed, the central phenomenon of our age seems to be rapidly growing interdependence, from the globalization of the world economy to the information revolution. That being so, does not our future depend on equitable and sustainable development in all parts of the world? In our view, such development depends, in turn, on flows of development assistance from the better-off to the less developed countries and on opening up the world's markets to trade and investment, but mainly on the efforts of each individual country to support its own social and economic development and to adapt to the fluctuating external environment.

We believe that the starting point is economic growth. Economic growth creates employment, which is by far the most effective mechanism for distributing wealth and opportunity so that both developed and developing countries can alleviate poverty. Governments are wont to assume that economic growth alone will eventually sort out their social problems. However, economic growth alone will not ensure jobs for the long-term unemployed.

Structural changes taking place in the Polish economy, accompanied by changes in ownership, have already resulted in significant shifts in the social distribution of income. Creation of an economic new deal, however, is not possible without social approval. Acquiring such approval for a structural process is connected, *inter alia*, with the need to initiate activities to prevent the extension of the sphere of poverty. Upon analysing the sources of poverty and its extent, it was assumed that support for economic growth, which reduces unemployment by raising labour demand, was a method of overcoming poverty as it existed in Poland. The assumptions with regard to the socio-economic development of the country, as formulated in the long-term document entitled "Strategy for Poland" and in a supplementary "Programme of socio-economic policy for the years 1994-1997," are in conformity with the recommendations that emerged from the World Summit for Social Development. The multidimensional approach to developmental problems presented in the "Strategy for Poland," including the treatment of social issues, corresponds to the commitments entered into during the Summit.

With regard to income security, the protection of a guaranteed minimum wage level within the national economy has been established by law. As another element of the social network aimed at ensuring social safety, we should mention activities aimed at halting and then restraining unemployment and at providing the unemployed, during a period delimited by the law, with the minimum means of subsistence.

Several social guarantees which have been designed to limit poverty are contained in our universal social insurance scheme. In the framework of this scheme, the State guarantees a source of income in respect to specified risks through programmes to promote productive employment and decrease unemployment, and to promote youth vocational activities. These programmes assume that special training and retraining strategies, particularly for youth and the long-term unemployed, should be widened and made more diverse. They also provide, as a target, the integration of the education system with youth and adult training, so as to better adjust the manpower resources structure to the needs of the labour market.

Taking into account the particularly strong influence of unfavourable economic and social trends upon the disabled, since 1994 the Government has implemented a programme to help the disabled and help integrate them into the society. Particular support has been given to vocational rehabilitation and the employment of the disabled.

The Polish social-security system is going through complex reform. The reform is aimed at restructuring the whole social-welfare system to ensure that incomes received from work and from social benefits guarantee an adequate standard of living, and that social assistance is used only to intervene in special situations. An unemployment insurance system and a programme to actively counteract unemployment are being developed, with a particular emphasis on the promotion of the economic activity of the unemployed in small towns and in rural areas and of the disabled.

We believe that the role of civil society in the follow-up and implementation process of the World Summit is highly important. Poland supports the efforts made by the Economic and Social Council to stimulate an informal dialogue within the Commission for Social Development, *inter alia* through the use of panels of experts to discuss with non-governmental organizations the priority subjects identified at the World Summit. We support the proposal that non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to participate in the work of the Commission.

It is necessary to increase public awareness of the outcome of the World Summit and of the results achieved to date. Nothing can take the place of the United Nations efforts, not only to emphasize the importance of the problems before us but above all to implement what the Summit recommended in the field of socially oriented development. Entering the twenty-first century, our Organization — we ourselves — should be able to meet the challenge of adding a human dimension to development. Human beings are, after all, our primary objective. This basic assumption of the Summit should guide us in our deliberations on the follow-up of what was decided at Copenhagen.

Mr. Teagarajan (Malaysia): The Malaysian delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report, entitled "Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development" (A/51/348). The report provides an important and useful framework for our deliberations in this Assembly. My delegation also wishes to associate itself with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Nineteen months have passed since our leaders met at Copenhagen and pledged their commitment to a global political, economic, ethical and spiritual vision for social development. Their commitment took into consideration the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of all the peoples around the globe. The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action symbolize this basic compact. If we recall, the following were the core issues discussed at the Summit: first, the reduction of overall poverty and the eradication of absolute poverty; secondly, the expansion of productive employment and the reduction of unemployment; and thirdly, the enhancement of social integration, particularly of the more disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

In following up on the decisions made at Copenhagen we must be guided by the principle of the centrality of people in the development process. In the pursuit of social justice, solidarity, harmony and equality among peoples, the international community must continue to promote the cause of pluralism and just economic and social development. Even as we witness the economic and social prosperity enjoyed by certain parts of the global community, we cannot be oblivious to the increasing numbers of people in both the North and the South who are living in abject poverty. It is utterly untenable, indeed deplorable, that about 1.3 billion people, a fifth of the human race, still lack access to the most basic necessities of life such as food and clean drinking water. Therefore, we should collectively strive towards an action-oriented programme that seeks to ensure that poverty eradication is achieved.

While the Declaration and Programme of Action of the Copenhagen Summit clearly defined the issues relating to poverty, employment and social integration, the commitments made in respect of international assistance, official development assistance and new additional resources have regrettably not been fulfilled. At the same time, major donor countries have been reluctant to provide additional resources. In the Copenhagen Declaration, donor Governments pledged to strive to achieve the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for overall official development assistance as soon as possible, and to increase the share of funding for social-development programmes to achieve the objectives and goals of the Declaration and the Programme of Action. Unfortunately, the achievement of this target has been far from satisfactory. This is very

disheartening. The major donors must live up to the pledges made if they are to contribute in any meaningful way to alleviating the plight of the world's poor and underprivileged.

My delegation notes the positive involvement of and the serious initiatives taken by various actors in the field of social development — national Governments, the various United Nations organs and bodies, the Bretton Woods institutions, regional organizations and the non-governmental actors — in trying to achieve what was agreed to at the Copenhagen Summit. Clearly all these initiatives require adequate resources to make them a reality. Indeed, unless concrete actions are taken and financial resources found for their execution, the observance of 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty will have been rather meaningless. I am afraid the same fate will befall the proclamation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty unless these commitments and pledges are fulfilled.

My delegation has noted that the Secretary-General's report refers to the initiatives undertaken by the Bretton Woods institutions — namely the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund — in pursuance of the Summit recommendations, especially in the areas of social development and human resource development.

We welcome the World Bank's new external finance for the social sector, which amounts to $3.33 billion for education, health, population programmes and nutrition. We also welcome the initiatives by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to provide special assistance to heavily indebted countries. In welcoming these initiatives we hope that they are carried out in a fair and just manner. These institutions should act neither as the debt collectors for the rich North nor as the enforcers of the lenders.

My delegation wishes to underline the importance of social integration in the context of social development. The security of the human person demands a comprehensive and integrated approach which takes into account all other factors, including cultural and religious values and norms.

Given the vast differences in the level of development between the poorest and least developed countries, those in transition economies and those which are highly industrialized, due consideration ought to be given to identifying and agreeing on the priorities for the implementation of the Programme of Action at the global level. We should be mindful that the priorities and the measures proposed to implement the Programme may not be appropriate to all Member States. We should also never forget that, at the end of the day, the primary responsibility for implementing the Summit's agreed objectives will fall on the individual Member States.

As for the institutional follow-up, the United Nations system undeniably has a role as a catalyst in the implementation of the Programme of Action. On the one hand, the General Assembly should continue formulating the overall policies *vis-à-vis* implementation. The Economic and Social Council, on the other hand, would provide the overall guidance and oversee system-wide coordination in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and make recommendations in that regard within the United Nations system. The coordinating role played by the Economic and Social Council in bringing the agencies involved in the implementation of the Programme of Action into a closer working relationship would ensure the avoidance of duplication of responsibilities.

My delegation wishes to reiterate Malaysia's commitment to the pledge made by the world's leaders at the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen in 1995. This is reflected in the various Government policies and programmes which are well established and broadly supported by the people. In addition, the administrative machinery and processes for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of those policies are also very much in place and are generally functioning in an effective fashion.

Through its socio-economic policies and programme for development Malaysia has been able to reduce drastically the incidence of poverty, to achieve virtually full employment, and to strengthen social integration and unity. This will continue to be one of the thrusts of the seventh Malaysia Plan for 1996 to 2000.

Mr. de Rojas (Venezuela) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Venezuela endorses the statements made on this agenda item by the delegation of Bolivia, on behalf of the Rio Group, and by the delegation of Costa Rica, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The delegation of Venezuela also wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the outcome of the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development (A/51/348), and to express its support for its contents.

My country is aware of the dramatic growth of poverty and the spread of new forms of exclusion which threaten human dignity of most of the citizens of the world. We consider social development a crucial challenge of our time. The Venezuelan Government therefore maintains that future generations' judgment of our time will depend on our ability to address successfully the challenges of poverty and social exclusion.

The convening of the World Summit for Social Development renewed the hope of the Government and the people of Venezuela. Following the Summit we immediately decided to take action to follow up the agreements reached at that landmark social forum. This was in accordance with what was laid down at the Summit, whereby it was stressed that national Governments are the actors responsible for bringing about the goals of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

My country's new strategy in the social area has been designed not only in terms of our own activities in that area; rather, it forms part of the State's new economic policy: "Agenda Venezuela". In this agenda the operation of the productive apparatus itself is expected to generate greater equity.

One of the important components of this commitment to social solidarity is raising the capacity for organization in order to generate the ability among the most disadvantaged part of the population to obtain its fair share of the social product. The promotion of community organizations is in keeping with this line of action. We should also stress that this social commitment involves continuation of family supplementary income systems. As social programmes require time to be established and to mature, they should not be dismantled or replaced until better and more efficient alternatives are found.

My country has assumed the responsibility to diminish poverty in the short term through social and economic strategies geared not only towards meeting basic physical needs such as health, nutrition, education and work, but which are also aimed at defending human rights and promoting the equitable distribution of income and wealth. This commitment implies activities in three specific areas. The first involves promoting the development of a system of social and household services for low-income families through programmes of family and student subsidies and care for the elderly. The second involves reviewing the legal framework and administrative procedures to ensure access by the most disadvantaged to economic, financial and technological resources, in order to join fully the labour market. The third involves promoting programmes for qualification and training to orient the labour force towards non-traditional activities.

Regionally, Venezuela has supported all of the initiatives of the Rio Group aimed at ensuring the full follow-up of the commitments of the World Summit for Social Development. Accordingly, we have been working closely with the countries of that Group to implement the provisions of the Buenos Aires declaration on fulfilment of the commitments of the Summit, and of its annex, which sets out the regional follow-up programme. Both documents reflect the imperative need to eradicate poverty as a key element of our region's social agenda.

In this context, Venezuela welcomed the recommendation of the Rio Group on the lead body for coordination of the follow-up of activities in the social sphere. In so doing it designated as national coordinator the Ministry of Family Affairs, as the governmental agency entrusted with the design and execution of social policies. At the same time, it invited civil society to take part in this endeavour.

At the hemispheric level, during the Summit of the Americas Venezuela reiterated the priority importance it attaches to the social sphere and gave its support to the convening of the Hemispheric Conference on the Eradication of Poverty and Discrimination held in January 1996 at Santiago, Chile.

Accordingly, the Government of Venezuela worked with countries of the hemisphere to identify innovative and creative measures to attack poverty through focused national programmes, the formulation of goals, and reform of the social sectors within the process of modernization of the State.

My Government believes it is imperative to support the idea of international social justice. To this end, each and every member of the international community must do its part towards what we refer to as the universal common good. With this idea in mind, it becomes ever more imperative to review the terms of the external debt that weighs heavily upon the developing countries and makes it difficult to meet the demands of development.

Venezuela believes it is encouraging for the international community that the United Nations is responsibly addressing the subject of social development today, more earnestly than ever, as we come to the end of the twentieth century. This has been further buttressed

by the Organization's recent world conferences geared to the social sphere, which also demonstrates that this is a complex task requiring a multidisciplinary, coordinated approach with an important ethical component. We hope that implementation of the outcome of the Summit will give renewed impetus to cooperation between countries and international organizations in order comprehensively to achieve development, justice and peace.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: There are no further speakers on this item. The draft resolution to be submitted under agenda item 45 will be considered at a later date to be announced.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 126, 133 and 135.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee which are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401 the Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee".

May I also remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Committee.

Agenda item 126

Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/502)

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/51/502).

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/2).

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 126.

Agenda item 133

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/503)

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/51/503).

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 133.

Agenda item 135

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/504)

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/51/504).

The draft resolution was adopted in the Fifth Committee without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly too wishes to adopt it?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/3).

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 135.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

United Nations A/51/PV.39

General Assembly
Fifty-first Session

Official Records

39th plenary meeting
Monday, 21 October 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 15

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(a) Election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council

The President: This morning the General Assembly will proceed to the election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 1996.

The five non-permanent outgoing members are the following: Botswana, Germany, Honduras, Indonesia and Italy. These five States cannot be re-elected and therefore their names should not appear on the ballot papers.

Apart from the five permanent members, the Security Council will include in 1997 the following States: Chile, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Poland and the Republic of Korea. The names of those States, therefore, should also not appear on the ballot papers.

Of the five non-permanent members which will remain in office in 1997 three are from Africa and Asia, one is from Eastern Europe and one is from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Consequently, pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1991 A (XVIII) of 17 December 1963, the five non-permanent members should be elected according to the following pattern: two from Africa and Asia, one from Latin America and the Caribbean and two from Western European and other States. The ballot papers reflect this pattern.

In accordance with established practice, there is an understanding to the effect that, of the two States to be elected from Africa and Asia, one should be from Africa and one from Asia.

I should like to inform the Assembly that the number of candidates, not exceeding the number of seats to be filled, receiving the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting will be declared elected.

In the case of a tie vote for a remaining seat, there will be a restricted ballot limited to those candidates which have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

96-86570 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

The President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballots, and there shall be no nominations.

Regarding candidatures, I have been informed that for the two vacancies from among the African and Asian States, there are three candidates, namely India, Japan and Kenya. Kenya has been endorsed by the group of African States.

As for the Latin American and Caribbean States, there are two candidates for one vacancy. The two candidates are Bolivia and Costa Rica.

From among the Western European and other States, there are three candidates for two vacancies: Australia, Portugal and Sweden.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, we shall proceed now to the election by secret ballot.

Ballot papers marked "A", "B" and "C" will now be distributed.

I request representatives to use only those ballot papers that have been distributed and to write on them the names of the five States for which they wish to vote.

A ballot paper containing more names from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it will be declared invalid. Names on a ballot paper of Member States which do not belong to that region will not be counted.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Braha (Albania), Mr. Iragorri (Colombia) and Mr. Gwary (Nigeria) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10:30 a.m. and resumed at 11:50 a.m.

The President: The result of the voting for the election of the five non-permanent members of the Security Council is as follows:

Group A — African and Asian States

Number of ballot papers:	181
Number of invalid ballots:	1
Number of valid ballots:	180
Abstentions:	0
Number of Members voting:	180
Required two-thirds majority:	120
Number of votes obtained:	
Kenya	172
Japan	142
India	40

Group B — Latin American and Caribbean States

Number of ballot papers:	181
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	181
Abstentions:	1
Numbers of Members voting:	180
Required two-thirds majority:	120
Number of votes obtained:	
Costa Rica	105
Bolivia	73
Columbia	1
Dominican Republic	1

Group C — Western European and other States

Number of ballot papers:	181
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	181
Abstentions:	0
Numbers of Members voting:	181
Required two-thirds majority:	121
Number of votes obtained:	
Sweden	153
Portugal	112
Australia	91

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, the following States were elected non-permanent members of the Security Council for a two-year period beginning 1 January 1997: Japan, Kenya and Sweden.

The President: I congratulate the States which have been elected members of the Security Council.

The representative of Bolivia has asked to speak on a point of order, and I call on him now.

Mr. Camacho Omiste (Bolivia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Bolivia signed a fair and fraternal agreement with the delegation of Costa Rica to the effect that support would be given to the delegation obtaining the larger number of votes in the first round.

The first round having been completed with a result favourable to Costa Rica, I am pleased and honoured to say that my delegation withdraws its candidature in this second round and supports the candidature of Costa Rica for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council. The delegation of Bolivia wishes to express thanks for the support it received from the delegations that voted for us. We shall be faithful to the commitments we have assumed with delegations on this occasion.

The President: I thank the representative of Bolivia for his cooperation. In accordance with the rules of procedure, we shall proceed now to a restricted ballot, taking into account the statement made by the representative of Bolivia.

There remain two seats to be filled: one from among the Latin American and Caribbean States and one from among the Western European and Other States. We shall therefore proceed to the first restricted ballot. This second round of balloting shall be restricted to the two States from among the Latin American and Caribbean States that were not elected but that obtained the largest number of votes in the previous ballot — Bolivia and Costa Rica, bearing in mind the statement we just heard from the representative of Bolivia — and to the two States from among the Western European and other States that were not elected but obtained the largest number of votes on the previous ballot — Australia and Portugal. This is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Ballot papers marked "B" and "C" will now be distributed.

May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "B", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the name of the one State for which they want to vote, and to write on the ballot papers marked "C", for the Western European and other States, the name of the one State for which they want to vote. Ballot papers marked "B" will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Bolivia or Costa Rica, and if they contain the name of more than one State. Ballot papers marked "C" will be declared invalid if they contain the name of a State other than Australia or Portugal, and if they contain the name of more than one State.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Braha (Albania), Mr. Iragorri (Colombia), and Mr. Gwary (Nigeria) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 12.10 p.m. and resumed at 12.35 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting for the election of two non-permanent members of the Security Council is as follows:

Group B — Latin American and Caribbean States

Number of ballot papers:	181
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	181
Abstentions:	9
Number of Members voting:	172
Required two-thirds majority:	115
Number of votes obtained:	
Costa Rica	167
Bolivia	5

Group C — Western European and other States

Number of ballot papers:	181
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	181
Abstentions:	0
Number of Members voting:	181
Required two-thirds majority:	121
Number of votes obtained:	
Portugal	124
Australia	57

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, the following States were elected non-permanent members of the Security Council for a two-year period beginning 1 January 1997: Costa Rica and Portugal.

The President: I congratulate the States which have been elected non-permanent members of the Security Council, and I thank the tellers for their assistance in this election.

This concludes our consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 15.

Programme of Work

The President: I should like to inform members that on Thursday, 24 October in the afternoon the Assembly will consider agenda item 160, entitled "Observer status for the International Seabed Authority in the General Assembly", and agenda item 36, entitled

"International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters", as the third and fourth items.

On Friday, 25 October, in the morning, the Assembly will first take up agenda item 49, entitled "Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)", followed by agenda item 29, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

I should also like to inform members that on Tuesday, 12 November, in the morning, the Assembly will consider agenda item 27, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.